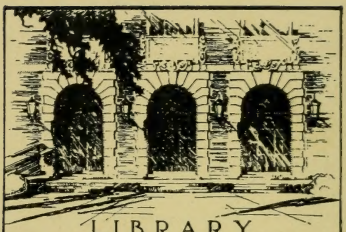

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THE

SOLDIER'S FAMILY;

OR,

GUARDIAN GENII.

A ROMANCE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY ANNE ORMSBY,

AUTHOR OF MEMOIRS OF A FAMILY IN SWISSERLAND.

VOL. III.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

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THE

SOLDIER'S FAMILY;

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GUARDIAN GENII.

CHAP. I.

"The duties of life require a consideration for the world, and a strong attachment to relative ties, moderated by religion; which imposes not any necessity of extirpating, but of cherishing and regulating natural propensities and affections, since they were implanted in the human breast by the Divine Essence for the most beneficial purposes."

AMONGST letters addressed to O'Brien at Paris, and forwarded thence to Brussels according to his desire, were some accounts relative to the fortune bequeathed to him by Lord Clanmourne. By these papers, Charles learned that his presence would be required in England and Ireland, to regulate some law business concerning the funded property and estate devised to him by the will of his late friend.

The enamoured youth, whom constant change of novel scenes during a journey of several weeks, had not cured of his passion, was frequently tempted by its powerful suggestions to return to the bosom of his family, for the support of that consolation of which he found his heart so much in need. Accompanied by trusty M'Shane, who frequently interrupted his reveries with some Hibernian witticism, which was become insipid to his master, he traversed long leagues, while his thoughts remained stationary at the metropolis he had left. The objects Charles looked at were often unobserved, or if remarked, attracted his notice because some reference to Seraphina gave them interest in his eyes. Being a lover of the fine arts, he let no opportunity escape of visiting the towns and edifices where the best specimens of human genius were exhibited; among which, few things afforded him so much pleasure as the examination of numerous churches in Flanders, where the works of many celebrated painters give their fame to posterity. But here, as he daily traced with the judgment of a *connoisseur* the efforts of the pencil, he thought, perhaps with a lover's partiality, that the ideal beauty delineated by the masterly hands of many of the most admired artists of the several schools of painting, fell far short of the real loveliness he adored in Seraphina:

and, probably, that famed statue "that enchants the world," would have seemed inferior, in his opinion, on a comparison of its symmetry with the animated form and living graces of the maid of his idolatry, whose every look was varying beauty, whose every movement was an expression of sentiment directed to the heart, without the aid of language, and surpassing its finest eloquence.

Impressed with Seraphina's image, O'Brien loved to tread the temples consecrated to the Divinity, considering every christian altar sacred to a christian soul:—his, full of philanthropy and piety, felt itself bound by fraternal ties to every being who worshipped the Supreme Father of mankind; and though he did not prostrate his body at the elevation of the host, neither bent his knee before the shrines of saints, nor kissed the relics hallowed by mistaken zeal, his was too warm not to experience religious emotions in beholding the devotion of those who followed the faith of Christ, though in a different way from that which appeared the purest manner to the national church of England. O'Brien, firm to those doctrines in which he had been bred, conducted himself with reverential respect in the Roman catholic ceremonies; and when he daily visited the places of popish worship, his fervent spirit soared in pure

devotion, in the solemn peals of sacred music, borne on the organ's swelling notes, or on the holy chaunt of choral voices, to the heavenly throne, where no praise or supplication is rejected by that mercy, ever inclined to receive the adoration and prayers of the devout soul.

His remembrance of Seraphina, ever chaste as herself, invested her in angelic purity when her idea filled his imagination in the sanctified inclosure, hallowed by religion; where the arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, and music's strains, united to those of holy verse in sacred anthems, elevated the mind from the charms of this world, to the sublime contemplation of beatified spirits in an eternity of glory.

"There," thought O'Brien in rapturous exultation, "there, I may be united in kindred and indissoluble bonds to Seraphina, and may indulge myself in loving her without any shadow of that passion, which, however refined by sentiment, must in mortal sensations be contaminated by the imperfections of human nature."

He had already proceeded as far as Brussels on his progress towards Holland, when the summons to his native kingdom recalled him to Paris, in

order to concert matters with his family relative to their return home.

A letter from his sister announced the arrival of Seraphina's parents, and her residence with them. This intelligence lessened his apprehension of returning to his family, conjecturing that occasionally seeing Seraphina as a visitor, would not expose his heart to that constant and arduous conflict which was the inevitable consequence of a continual intimate association as residents in the same house, where he must be every moment placed in the utmost danger of feeling innumerable emotions, almost impossible to be concealed. The idea of revisiting Paris, and the unavoidable duty of paying his compliments to Lord Herbert, his lady, and their adorable daughter, excited a thousand tumultuous and mixed sensations in O'Brien's soul: if for an instant the lover's passion experienced a gratification in the absolute obligation that urged him into the presence of Seraphina, his honour condemned and suppressed the feeling as inimical to virtue; for his was too rigid to yield in any point that might be contested, and his heart was too pure to suffer his reason to be misled so greatly as to rejoice at the necessity of putting himself into a situation of temptation, which might prove seductive; and which, therefore, he

would have felt it requisite to fly, had not many points of sentiment and virtue compelled him to brave a trial in encountering a conflict, rather than appear deficient in grateful affection to his kind friend Lord Herbert, in shunning an opportunity of paying his lordship congratulatory compliments on an emancipation from an unhappiness.

As he approached Paris, his agitation increased. The joy he anticipated in embracing his family, was almost destroyed by the dread of experiencing a heightened passion, which his delicay and friendship for Wilmot would consider as a heinous crime; for honour had enforced on his mind, the superiority of that amiable youth's claims to Seraphina.

On arriving at Sir Phelim's abode, O'Brien's heart palpitated with strong emotions. Erina, who had flown on the wings of joy to welcome her beloved brother, met him on the stairs, and her affectionate salutation inspired such true delight, that he mounted with elastic steps and exhilarated spirits to meet the maternal embrace. Mrs. O'Brien and Sir Phelim had stationed themselves with parental impatience on the landing-place to receive their dear Charles, who per-

ceiving Lady Kinross moving forward through the antichamber to greet him, bounded forward with gallantry to bow upon her offered hand. On raising his eyes, he was struck immovable by the elegant form of Seraphina. She had advanced to the door of the saloon to welcome his return; and she inclined her fine figure in a gracefully dignified salute on seeing his eyes directed towards her. Fixed, like himself, in an attitude of admiration, excited beyond expectation, she stood a moment in contemplation of the youth's attractions. His beautifully waving locks, dishevelled by a long journey, shaded his polished forehead, while the deep glow that crimsoned his cheeks, from emotion and surprise, added fairness to his temples, and heightened the lustre of his eyes, beaming with radiance, which was softened by a smile of ineffable sweetness. That smile was returned by one of Seraphina's, inexpressibly tender; her glances too beamed sentiment, while a blush of pleasure, increasing the brilliancy of her charms, made her divinely beautiful.

O'Brien felt the full force of her power over his soul; and, as he advanced to pay her courteous homage, he endeavoured to strengthen his heart by the remembrance of Wilmot's claim to that fair hand, which, although waved in an af-

fectionately gracious salutation, he ventured not to touch.

Profoundly bowing, the timid trembling youth was retreating from the shrine of forbidden love, when he saw Lord Herbert coming towards him with an air of so much friendship, that he felt himself impelled forward by so strong a sentiment of regard, as to address his lordship almost with filial affection.

Being now presented to Lady Herbert, who received him with the most gracious politeness, O'Brien found himself so surrounded by all the charms of elegant society, and so powerfully drawn forth to feel and express the flow of sentiment in its most delightful intercommunication, that pleased and pleasing, the hours fled unheeded by any of the party; until the advance of time warned them to part for the night, after a most agreeable supper, to which the baronet had invited his noble friends to welcome his grandson's return by little fête.

As Madame de Briançon was included amongst the guests, she solicited the honour of Lord Herbert's and Sir Phelim's families to assemble at her hotel on the day after the morrow to a dinner,

to celebrate the arrival of her son, whom she flattered herself she should have the felicity of presenting to her charming English friends on that day, as he had fixed it for his return to Paris.

The pleasures of the evening, which the fair Rosaline had enjoyed in a beloved society of friends, amongst whom she at times almost forgot she was no longer an inhabitant of her native land, had inspired her with a temporary gaiety, which enabled her to be in her manner and appearance like herself in former times, when with the gentle liveliness of youthful spirits, she charmed others to the gaiety she felt. The blush of roses tinted the cheeks of Lady Kinross for the evening, and the joy of seeing her friend Erina in ecstasies at Charles's return, united to the testimonies of his flattering regard for the beloved companion of his sister, called smiles on the charming lips of Rosaline; and it was not until she heard the name of her cousin pronounced by the viscountess, when she took leave of the company, that a sigh heaved the bosom of the fair maid.

In the morning she no longer, as usual, enlivened the breakfast-table with that sweet cheerfulness which had so often charmed the circle of admiring friends, Rosaline, now pale and evidently dejected,

appeared like a lily new washed by a shower, and drooping, overcharged with rain, doomed to fade in the shade, where no ray of sunshine could penetrate the cold gloom, to renovate the withering beauties of the delicate flower. This idea struck O'Brien as his feeling heart marked the sadness depictured in her soft countenance, where he perceived the traces of recent tears. His animated friendship for the amiable girl made him experience a pang as he viewed her altered appearance, and watched the sorrow, which, when unconstrained, she strove not much to hide.

In the observation of Rosaline's unhappiness, O'Brien almost ceased to feel how little his own heart was at ease; and impatient to learn the cause of uneasines which he would have wished most ardently to have had the power of alleviating, he noticed it to Erina in private, demanding the reason of that melancholy expression in the looks and manner of Lady Kinross, which had that morning given him extreme pain. The intelligence communicated on this subject by his sister, considerably increased his concern, as it informed him the sufferings of Rosaline were not either of a temporary kind, or such as could be relieved; for he perceived too plainly, that they must increase, rather than be diminished, by that which proves

a balm to most affliction; and he was also aware that no friend, however warmly attached to her, or anxious for her fate, had a right to interfere in a business of so delicate a nature, as her future connection with relations who claimed the power of disposing of her hand, and to whom she was too rich a prize to admit of their relinquishing a union with her, however disagreeable the intended marriage might be to her feelings.

An engagement for the party to assemble at Lord Herbert's, called them together; and O'Brien forgot his own sufferings in sympathizing with those of his fair friend, whom he exerted all his powers to enliven.

Earnest in the desire of consoling her, he perceived, with pleasure and admiration, that Seraphina was also absorbed by the wish of abstracting Lady Kinross from every painful recollection and distressing anticipation, by affording her the best amusement for the present hours; and he observed, with delighted astonishment, the infinitely varied talents possessed by the idol of his soul to fix it in enchantment.

A desire of pleasing, from the pure benevolence of her heart, unmixed with any intention

of shining, called forth every grace of manner, and urged to the display of accomplishments equally surprising and charming. Anxious to please, yet unassuming; ready to gratify, but unobtrusive; bewitching, while unconscious of her perfections, Seraphina appeared more than human to the ardent fancy of her enthusiastic adorer; who, in the acme of a passion, pure as it was violent, felt all considerations of self-gratification subdued by a virtuous wish, that Wilmot, the beloved friend of his soul, might meet the reward to which he was entitled, in the obtainment of Seraphina's hand, and the possession of her heart; which, to O'Brien's warm imagination, seemed the highest felicity the whole world could bestow on any mortal.

Whilst his mind was thus purified by the sublimity of friendship, and the utmost refinement of love, its object, in the exercise of the first sentiment, and unconscious of exciting or cherishing the latter, appeared like some celestial being, happy in its own divine essence, and still happier in the participation of its enjoyments with congenial spirits.

The hours flew on the wings of pleasure. As O'Brien's soul hung enraptured on the dulcet har-

mony of Seraphina's voice, accompanied by her mandoline, he regretted the rapid lapse of time; and Rosaline sighed at the idea that the flight of moments would bring the morrow in their course, that day on which her destiny depended! At dinner and at supper the Viscount de Briançon's health went round in compliment to the viscountess, whilst the intended bride united in the courtesy, and with trembling hands put the glass untasted to her lips. Wilmot was also toasted at the request of Lady Herbert, who, with all the warmth of maternal feeling, praised his person, and extolled his character, while pleasure sparkled in the eyes of O'Brien at the exultation of exalted friendship; and as he drank to the health of his companion in arms, he aspirated the sincerest wishes for his success and felicity! The smiling Erina united with her brother in the most earnest desires for the happiness of his friend, regarding him as her own, although personally unknown. A crimson blush suffused the lovely face and bosom of Seraphina at the mention of a youth who had been proposed to her affection, and to whose merits and generosity her gratitude felt a debt too great, she thought, to be repaid by her heart, unless it were devoted more to him than she believed it could ever be. As the name of Wilmot passed round the table, Rosaline, awakened to

the sense of her own situation by an observance of Seraphina, who, destined by the wishes of her friends to one youth, whilst her heart, unknown to herself, was certainly in the possession of another, knew how to commiserate her fate; and as she lifted the wine to her lips, she gave a sigh to the struggling passion of O'Brien, and to the latent tenderness of its object, which, like concealed fire ready to blaze forth, had been kindled in the bosom of susceptibility, and, gathering strength from increasing sensibility, would soon become an inextinguishable flame. While Rosaline's sympathy gave a sigh to the apparently ill-fated love of the sentimental pair, doomed to adore each other, and yet too generous not to sacrifice their individual felicity to Wilmot's happiness, she dropped a tear to his idea into the glass of sparkling liquor, which her secret feelings, equally with the courtesy of compliment, consecrated to the health and happiness of that youth, whose virtues and perfections had usurped the highest place in her fancy. "May Wilmot be blessed in the full fruition of every desire his heart may form!" sighed Rosaline secretly, while her imagination languished in sadness at the idea of her own approaching trial; and she entered the solitude of her chamber disquieted at the anticipation of the morrow.

She never retired to the repose of night without offering up her thanks to the celestial throne for the enjoyments of the day, and devout solicitations for the protection by which she existed; and on this night her prayers were inspired, by the dejection of her mind, with those exalted feelings of piety the soul finds requisite for its support under affliction.

Rosaline supplicated Divine Mercy for blessings, without daring to prescribe, even by wishes, for the kind or measure of those blessings she was persuaded consummate Wisdom knew how to dispense for her ultimate good: and with a soul tranquillized by devotion, and a heart lightened by dependance on the great Disposer of events, the amiable girl reclined her head upon the pillow of peace, to dream in agitated slumbers of confused images, amongst which Wilmot's idea was mingled with that of her cousin and future husband.

Disordered rather than refreshed by the unquietnesss of sleep, she rose on the morrow languid from her perturbed thoughts and fevered frame; and distressed O'Brien and his sister by the expression of sadness which lurked under an assumed smile and hectic blush, like a worm con-

cealed in the rosebud whilst it is preying on its bloom, and secretly and surely preventing its opening to the sun-beam, that would expand it to full beauty and maturity.

In consequence of the letters O'Brien had received, Sir Phelim fixed his immediate departure from Paris, in order to attend his grandson in the arrangement of his affairs in London and at Glenrock; where his legal knowledge might be of service to a young man, who, notwithstanding his general science, was more a scholar and a soldier, than he was versed in the minutiæ of law business.

Having named an early day for bidding adieu to the metropolis of France, the baronet's family were employed in preparations for their departure, to travel in company with Lord Herbert, his lady and daughter; while the sorrowing Rosaline looked forward with increasing affliction to the loss of all those beloved companions, whose presence alone had rendered Paris tolerable to her; and she anticipated with dread the melancholy day, when, deprived of the charming company of her two bosom friends, she should be left, as it were, in solitude to mourn an eternal separation from them.

The weight which had of late depressed her spirits, sunk them now to the lowest ebb; and she felt seriously indisposed, when she retired to dress for the dinner at Madame de Briançon's.

Fauçhon, the *femme de chambre* recommended by the viscountess to attend her niece, had long been busily occupied in arranging ornaments she judged suitable to the rank and beauty of her lady, on the important day of her introduction to the viscount; and during the cares of her mistress's *toilette*, the loquacious Fauçhon, more voluble than usual, talked of nothing but her lady's lover and approaching marriage with all the familiarity of a French abigail; who generally assumes the licence of conversing with the ease of a friend on the most private concerns of the family in which she is a resident.

Lady Kinross had that sweet condescension of manner to her inferiors, which encouraged the lowest rank to feel honoured by her favour, without venturing to presume too much upon it. She had always treated her attendants with extreme complaisance, avoiding at the same time the least freedom, and no waiting-woman, except a French *soubrette*, would have found a possibility of talking to Rosaline on any confidential subject or fa-

mily affair, unless it related to something of domestic concerns she had entrusted to her superintendence and management. If any thing could have ruffled the placid temper of Lady Kinross, she would have felt displeased at the familiarity of her *femme de chambre* in conversing with her on a theme always disagreeable to her, and never more so than at this moment, when every thing that reminded her of her situation agonized her heart.

Complaining of a violent headach, which, in fact, almost distracted her, she hurried over the labours of dress, without bestowing a thought on her appearance, and dismissed Fauçhon, not to think of the viscount, but to forget him.

To reflect on any subject, was to be reminded of Wilmot, and this theme of contemplation her delicacy now forbade.

In a state of mind painful beyond description, Rosaline, pale, trembling, and dejected, reached the hotel of Madame de Briançon; who, by conducting her niece to the suite of apartments destined for her future residence, and which had been just fitted up for her immediate reception, increased the agitation of the delicate girl to such

a degree, that a shower of tears alone prevented her from fainting.

Erina endeavoured to assuage the grief of her friend, in which she participated with a sympathy equal to her affection.

The necessity of exertion inspired Rosaline with fortitude sufficient to meet an inevitable trial, and she soon assumed sufficient composure of mind and appearance to enter the saloon, where her aunt waited the arrival of her guests; expressing some surprise her son delayed his coming, as he had appointed to be with her that morning at an early hour.

The company invited to welcome his return to Paris, consisted of the count and Chevalier St. Arnaud, and the family of his affianced bride, beside that of Lord Herbert and the baronet. The viscount, however, for whom the party had been assembled, was expected in vain, to the extreme uneasiness of his mother, and the astonishment of the rest of the society. The amiable Rosaline herself had too much sensibility to see without the liveliest concern her aunt's alarm; and would willingly have endured the severest trial her cousin's presence could have occasioned her suffering

on a first interview, which she was sensible must be aukward in the highest degree, rather than purchase a respite from her own pain, at the expence of disquietude to Madame de Briançon; whose maternal solicitude, frequently expressed, excited too much sympathy in the circle of her guests, to permit the party, assembled to congratulate her on the arrival of the viscount, enjoying fully the convivial pleasures of an entertainment intended to be uncommonly gay: and although Rosaline had anticipated extreme uneasiness from apprehension of feeling herself incapable of participating in the festivity, or assisting the least in enlivening the scene, her heart was too good to forbear lamenting most sincerely the cause of that expression of seriousness, entirely congenial with the situation of her own mind; and which prevented her friends observing the pensive sadness that would have attracted their remarks amidst surrounding cheerfulness; but which, nevertheless, she was convinced, she should in vain have endeavoured to throw aside, assured that the attentions, or neglect of the viscount would have occasioned her equal uneasiness.

Madame de Briançon appeared so greatly alarmed at his unaccountable absence, at a time when she was assured nothing but the most

serious reasons could have prevented the execution of his intention to visit Paris on a most important business to a young man of his gallantry, that the gentle Rosaline, pitying her aunt's distress, could not avoid paying her the compliment which she considered her duty, and offered to remain with the viscountess in order to alleviate her affliction, although the separation, even of an hour, from the bosom friend whom she was so soon to part from, as she feared, for ever, was a matter of excessive sorrow. But Rosaline had learned the lesson of sacrificing her own feelings to that of others; and when her aunt thanked her for the consolation her society would afford her in the anxiety of a situation full of the most painful suspense, the amiable girl regretted not the tears she shed on the bosom of Erina when she bid her adieu, although she wept at the melancholy reflection, that in a few days they must be torn from each other, most probably never to meet again!

Impressed with the same idea, Erina mingled her sorrows with those of her friend, and took leave of her with a promise to call early on the following morning.

Accompanied by her mother, Sir Phelim, and O'Brien, she visited Madame de Briançon, who

had just received intelligence, by an express, that the viscount was so ill of a dangerous fever as to be given over by his physicians, and that he requested to see his mother as soon as possible.—This summons to the sick bed of an only son made the viscountess hurry preparations for an immediate and expeditious journey, to bless the child whom she almost dreaded she should not find in existence.

Judging it best, for many reasons, that Lady Kinross should not bear her company on the melancholy visit, Madame de Briançon requested her niece to retire to her former situation in the convent. To this, however, the baronet's family ventured to raise an objection, by soliciting the honour of her company till the last moment of their stay in Paris.

The mention of their departure threw the dejected girl into so much affliction, as to affect her friends deeply, and alarm her aunt, already much distressed at the late observation of her declining spirits. Although the precise cause of her melancholy remained a secret to Madame de Briançon, she divined that the loss of Erina would grieve Rosaline excessively; and, fearing her health might suffer, if left alone to mourn the absence of all her

friends, she endeavoured to persuade Mrs. O'Brien to permit her daughter's stay at the convent for a short time; assuring Sir Phelim's family she should consider it an obligation that could never be repaid, and that her dear little *charmante demoiselle* should find a maternal affection in her care, until circumstances admitted her return to a mother's protection.—" I have often wished," added the viscountess, " to see Ireland since my acquaintance with friends whose agreeable society has made me desirous of continuing that intimacy, which affords me infinite pleasure. If you will do me the favour to permit Erina's remaining my guest, to console my niece and me in our affliction, I shall esteem myself for ever indebted to your friendship; and should it please Heaven to grant my prayers for the restoration of my son, it will be in my power to render the visit of my amiable charge very delightful by the festivities his recovery will occasion. My dear niece, for whose happiness I am maternally solicitous, will delight in the company of her friend in whatever may occur, and we shall be too grateful for the favour of her society to let any event be an obstacle to our conducting her to her paternal home."

Whilst the viscountess thus solicited the stay of Erina to console the sorrowing Rosaline, the coun-

tenance of that charming girl became enlightened with a ray of hope; and fixing her soft blue eyes alternately on Sir Phelim, Mrs. O'Brien, Charles, and his sister, she seemed to entreat them not to refuse a request on which her happiness depended; and her looks in tacit expression assured them, that *more* than her happiness depended on the presence of Erina, who wiping away her own tears, and those of her friend's, said, with a smile of angelic sweetness, "The terms offered for my detention by Madame Briançon appear to me such as it is absolutely impossible friendship can reject.—The pleasure of contributing to her's, and my beloved Rosaline's, would be a sufficient inducement to make me endure a little longer separation from my dear parents; but the consideration of procuring them the delight of a society they could only enjoy by my remaining a hostage for the fulfilment of an engagement to visit Glenrock, puts it out of my power to demur an instant about staying till they can accompany me to my paternal home. Oh! Madame," cried Erina, kissing the hand of the viscountess, and the cheek of Rosaline, with the warmest emotion, "how rejoiced shall I be to console you under your present grief—to partake the happiness I trust awaits you—and welcoming you both to my native land, detain you long our guests by the endearments of friendship,

and the pleasures of my home, abounding in all the beauties of nature; and where hospitality will exert all its offices to delight our visitors, in endeavouring to repay the courtesies we have received from their politeness!"

Whilst Erina spoke, she saw in the countenance of her parents and brother the approbation her expressive looks solicited with filial deference; for her indulgent grandsire, fond mother, and the affectionate Charles had feelings too much in unison with her own angelic disposition, to refrain sympathizing in distress, however unconnected the circumstances of it might be with their own fate; and their souls were too much alive to compassion, to fail in a desire to relieve the grief in which they ever participated, whatever sacrifice of self-consideration might be requisite.

To return to Ireland without Erina gave pain to the hearts of her attached relations, not merely on account of the loss her absence would occasion both on their journey and at Glenrock, but the idea of her lamenting a separation from them for an uncertain time, which events might greatly protract, became an additional subject of uneasiness in leaving her in France. Feeling convinced, however, of her finding consolation in performing the

the duties of friendship, they gathered tranquillity from the assurance, that she would be perfectly safe under the protection of Madame de Briançon, and, even during her absence, at the convent; and in consequence of this persuasion, they consented to let Erina remain the companion of her beloved young friend; requesting the viscountess and her lovely niece to seize the earliest opportunity of making a long visit to Glenrock.

Every thing being speedily arranged for the departure of Madame de Briançon, she hurried away to the south of France, leaving Rosaline the guest of Erina for a few days previous to their removal to the convent, when their friends were to set off for England.

The short time Seraphina had to stay with her beloved companions was spent in their society, and in regretting she was obliged so soon to leave them.—Her tears often flowed at the idea of a separation undetermined as to its duration; for although she flattered herself with the hope of embracing Lady Kinross and Erina at some future period, she was aware their residence in countries divided from Britain by the seas that surrounded it, might throw numerous obstacles in the way of their meeting.

This idea made the three friends weep most bitterly on the morning of Seraphina's departure. She would have bid them adieu, and said innumerable tender things, had not emotion silenced her: she looked, however, unutterable affection; and, encircled in the arms of Rosaline and Erina, would longer have indulged in sorrow, had not O'Brien, in tenderness to all parties, shortened the heart-rending farewell by seizing the hand of Miss Herbert, to lead her to the carriage in waiting. She looked back repeatedly, smiling a fond adieu, while tears streamed down her cheeks; and as her conductor fixed his eyes on her's, where all the softness of her soul beamed in mild radiance, he thought she never appeared so divinely beautiful.

His own heart was full; and returning to salute Lady Kinross, he pressed her hand with all the ardour of friendship, and dropped a tear on Erina's cheek as he kissed it.

The gentle girl, who, in delicacy to Rosaline, had endeavoured to conceal the sorrow she felt in separating from a tenderly-beloved family, could not avoid bursting into a passion of grief on being pressed to the maternal bosom. The carriage belonging to Lord Herbert, in passing Sir Phelim's, which was to take the two friends to the convent

ere it proceeded on the journey, gave them a last view of the weeping Seraphina and her parents, who each waved an affectionate adieu to Rosaline and Erina. Bidding a fond farewell to the good baronet, Mrs. O'Brien and Charles, as they drove from the nunnery, the sorrowing girls entered the gloomy edifice with agonized hearts, which scarcely admitted of sufficient composure to permit their paying the requisite compliments to the Lady Abbess. Seeing their affliction, she endeavoured to console them, by pious reflections and exhortations to indifference about the world and all its concerns. They were sensible, indeed, that religion could alleviate every affliction, and that devotional exercises must cheer every situation; and although they knew christianity forbid a great anxiety about temporal pleasures, they were convinced that *the duties of life require a consideration for the world, and a strong attachment to relative ties, moderated by religion, which imposes not any necessity of extirpating, but of cherishing and regulating natural propensities and affections, since they were implanted in the human breast by the Divine Essence for the most beneficial purposes.*

CHAP. II.

"It must be impossible for a mind of integrity to deviate from rectitude, which teaches, that to mislead respecting our opinion, or even to conceal it when desired to declare it, is at best meanly wrong, and may be highly criminal: for although there can be no necessity to reveal our sentiments voluntarily, yet when we are called upon to explain them without reserve, morality then requires strict sincerity as the criterion of truth, too sacredly enjoined Christians as a religious obligation, to be even tacitly infringed by prevarication, subterfuge, or evasion."

AMONGST the religious sisterhood who rejoiced in the return of Lady Kinross and her friend to the convent, Agnes testified the highest delight, and became, as formerly, their frequent associate. The nun's company was agreeable to them, although the disappointments of life, and the sorrows which still depressed her mind, threw a shade of sadness over her countenance, and gave a melancholy turn to her conversation.—She was a constant evening visitor in Rosaline's saloon, where the absence of

Seraphina was hourly lamented by her late companions: in her loss Agnes seemed to feel an increase of her griefs; yet she was disinterested enough to rejoice in the change of circumstances that had robbed her of a beloved friend, and placed her in a happy situation, although that change had converted the convent into a gloomy solitude to the nun; who had enjoyed in Seraphina's presence the charms of friendship, and a prospect of living constantly the dear associate of one who possessed a congenial soul and a sympathetic heart, and to weep with whom was consolation to a tender and afflicted mind.

Agnes, debarred from all immediate intercourse with the world, had wept Seraphina's departure from the convent, as she would have wept her interment within its walls; and now felt happy in the means of hearing of her through Rosaline and Erina, to whom she had promised to write as soon as possible after her arrival in London.

The prospect of this correspondence, and the receipt of other letters from their friends, became a source of enjoyment, even in anticipation, to the amiable girls; who felt themselves not totally deprived of pleasure, since they could afford it to

each other, to the dejected Agnes, and lived in the hope of receiving intelligence of the happiness of those who were dear to their hearts. The kind disposition of Lady Kinross led her to extreme solicitude about her aunt, and made her ardently desire to hear of the viscount's restoration to health; and although it would confirm the fate of her union with him, which she dreaded, she would not permit her thoughts to dwell on the idea that events might liberate her from an unhappy engagement; for she would have been an object of horror to herself, had she for an instant conceived a possibility of feeling reconciled to the greatest advantage obtained through the misfortune of any individual.

Accounts from Madame de Briançon arrived soon after her departure, announcing she had found her son alive, but too ill to allow her entertaining sanguine hopes of his recovery.

Nothing now occurred to mark the days of Rosaline and Erina, except the receipt of the following letters.

FROM O'BRIEN TO ERINA.

Dover, Nov. 1st.

"According to promise, and in obedience to the dictates of my affection for an amiable sister, I seize the pen to acquaint her of our safe arrival on British ground, after a pleasant passage; during which the wind was fair, and the weather uncommonly fine.

"After this intelligence I have nothing new to communicate, except that Miss Herbert commissions me to say a thousand kind things to you and Lady Kinross; and to inform you she would have written, had I not undertaken the business of letting you know we had landed in good health and spirits in England:—in good spirits did I say? Yes! my Lord and Lady Herbert, in the full possession of happiness, endeavour to dispense it to all around them. Our beloved parents, tranquil in mind, enjoy with the highest relish the pleasures of a delightful society, where friendship, founded on perfect esteem, binds us in the greatest harmony. Nothing can be more charming than our little party assembled round the convivial board by a good fire, after the fatigues of a day's journey. My grandfather's pleasantry and benevolence, Lord Herbert's noble mind, his lady's elegant vivacity,

the sweet placidity of our dear gentle mother, and the exquisite sensibility, the refined taste, the exalted soul of the incomparable Seraphina, expressed in every word, look, and gesture, and rendering her angelic in manner as in beauty, spreads enchantment over the scene, and my heart. I am at once delighted and uneasy—and while enraptured by ecstatic enjoyment, I feel unhappy at the idea of my being within the influence of a dangerous fascination; anxiously desire the termination of this trial, to which the company of Seraphina exposes me, and yet tremble at the approach of the period when I shall cease to behold her, or hear the dulcet tones of her melodious voice.—What an inconsistency is man!

"With an intention of resuming the pen on my arrival in London, I shall now conclude, after requesting you to present my most friendly greetings to Lady Kinross, accompanied by the affectionate remembrance and best wishes of all our party to her and yourself.

"Farewell, beloved Erina! That Heaven may bless you ever, is the sincere prayer of your tenderly attached brother,

"C. O'C. O'BRIEN."

FROM SERAPHINA TO ROSALINE AND ERINA.

London, Nov. 6th.

" Amiable and beloved friends of my soul, I rejoice in greeting you! My heart pants to recommence an intercourse with you too long interrupted. I am eager to tell you how much I feel my separation from you; and tell you that I still, daily, pay the tribute of tears to the remembrance of you both.

" I should have written at Dover had I not been much fatigued by our passage, which was tedious though good.

" My journey homeward would have been delightful to me, had not every mile that brought me to a country endeared to my heart, led me farther distant from loved associates, whom it may be long, very long, ere I embrace again. But the most extended distance, the greatest length of time, even a separation from you for ever, could have no power to weaken a friendship that must always bind me to you indissolubly.

" Oh! my friends, may Heaven grant us a speedy reunion! In the meanwhile write to me,

dearest Rosaline and Erina—write long letters, to comfort me in a cruel absence. Let me frequently receive testimonies of living in your remembrance, to console me for the privation of your charming society. On my journey hither the presence of my favourite Sir Phelim, my dear Mrs. O'Brien, and her amiable son, cheered my spirits. The worthy baronet's pleasant sallies of elegant humour often made me smile, in spite of the regret of leaving you; the idea of being separated from Rosaline and Erina claimed a frequent sigh, which the softness of her dear mother, and the polite assiduities of the amiable youth, who was the soul of our party, soothed into a calm of mind, so combined with a pleasing sensation of sadness, as to be delightful to a heart endued with feelings like mine, possessing by inheritance the keenest sensibility, which has been nourished by the events of my life, and by circumstances calculated to mature sentiment to an extreme acuteness. I have been from childhood accustomed to have my vivacity checked by an inexplicable sensation; and have seldom had cause to smile without an equal reason to drop a tear to some occurrence, enveloping me in an affliction already past, present, or threatening my future days. But I should be ungrateful to Providence were I not to think my lot most happy.——I am, I trust, grateful to Hea-

ven, and think myself blessed in every particular, even in those strong feelings which render me susceptible, in an extraordinary degree, to events that might affect others in an infinitely less painful manner. I should consider myself unworthy of your friendship, if mine were less enthusiastic; and I could never enjoy your presence as I ought, were I not deeply touched by your absence.

"To console me, however, for the privation of your society, I am excessively sensible to the joy of being restored to my admirable parents. It is not the rank I hold in the world that gratifies me; it is not the splendour of my present situation that delights me, nor does my happiness spring from the pleasures of life, which open in all their gaiety to my view: no, my friends, the source of my felicity is in my heart, where religion, filial affection, the love of my friends, a desire of virtue, and a taste for domestic duties and the enjoyments of sentiment, combine to render my existence charming in the anticipation of future beatitude.

"I received much satisfaction in meeting the kind instructress of my childhood, the good and respectable Sennora Leonora; who embraced me with a truly maternal affection on my return to

her after a long absence, during which she had been deeply afflicted at the idea that I might be lost to her for ever. The tenderness this valuable woman has felt for me from my infancy, and her fidelity to my mother for a length of years, must attach me to her to the last hour of my life.

" She had removed from the cottage in the forest to St. James's square, where she was anxiously waiting our arrival.

" Wilmot was there also, by my father's desire, to welcome us to London. It would be impossible for me to describe my sensations, when I was introduced to the youth, to whose friendship I am indebted so deeply. Impressed with the most exalted idea of him, I found my imagination, elevated as it had been to the utmost height, had not been raised above his personal or mental perfections. With every quality that charms, he possesses a modesty which renders him truly admirable, by being unconscious of pleasing.

" Although my kind father and mother appear extremely anxious to attach us mutually, I am assured we shall be left at liberty to decline the union they evidently desire most ardently. Wilmot's attentions are assiduous, soft, and flattering. I

regard him as I would a kind brother; I feel for him admiration, esteem, the warmest interest, gratitude unbounded, and even a tender affection;—every sentiment of attachment, in fine, except love.

"Our first interview was aukward, as might be supposed, from the nature of our introduction to each other. My embarrassment, which I endeavoured in vain to conceal, rendered Wilmot excessively timid. Being, however, associates under a roof, which from childhood had been to to him a paternal home, and which had now become mine, hourly opportunities occurred to lessen our restraint in each other's society; and the day succeeding our first meeting put us on a footing of fraternal and sisterly confidence and intimacy. This species of intercourse taking place between us, as it were, by sympathy, the generous youth, in consistence with his exalted character, seized the earliest occasion to convince me he made no pretensions to my hand; and I felt I owed him the sincere avowal of the situation of my heart. Thanking me warmly for the frank confession I had entrusted to him, he informed me I had infinitely obliged him by affording him a clear light and true compass, by which he should be enabled to steer his future course through life. He assured me my confidence had bound him my brother; and, in the

enthusiasm of my feelings, I professed to him all a sister's regard, and told him I should consider it amongst my first duties to perform towards him every office of affection aud kindness the ties of that sacred title imposed. I feel now, indeed, obliged more than ever, if it be possible, to watch over the interests and happiness of the amiable Wilmot. The sisterly attachment I feel for him will devote me to a life of celibacy, to secure to him, as I shall make it one of my chief cares to do, the reversion of the whole handsome fortune which, waving most nobly the rights my grandfather's will invested him with, he generously gave up to my father. Dear and amiable Wilmot, what happiness shall I experience in repaying, or, rather, in endeavouring to express my sense of the obligations your virtue and friendship have conferred on me in serving my father, as you have ever done most essentially by innumerable benefits!

" Having written a very long letter, I must conclude it by the dictates of prudence in opposition to my inclination, which would tempt me to indulge myself in continuing this delightful intercourse without interruption.

" With the hope and request of hearing from you, my dear Rosaline and Erina, I must now lay aside my pen.

"I cannot, however, close my packet, without begging you to embrace our dear Agnes for me. Assure her that her kindness is impressed for ever on my heart, as her idea is engraven on my memory. Tell her I pray for her each night and morning, as I am certain her affection and piety will prompt her to recollect me in her orisons.

"Adieu, my beloved friends! Think of me, and ever remain assured that the constant remembrance of Rosaline and Erina consecrates my heart continually to the tenderest amity for you both!

"SERAPHINA HERBERT."

FROM O'BRIEN TO ERINA.

ALBEMARLE-STREET, Nov. 8th.

"HAVING found our late apartments unoccupied, we have taken them for a fortnight, hoping the termination of my business here will liberate us from London at the expiration of that time.

"I ought not to desire a detention in a situation which daily becomes more painful to me, and which all my principles tell me I should fly as a dangerous temptation to seduce me from them.

" The polite attentions of Lord and Lady Herbert have induced us to accept their invitations to dine at St. James's-square three times since our arrival. In consideration of my intimacy with his lordship, and my friendship for Wilmot, it became impossible for me to decline being of the party, as we were asked to meet him.

" The company was small and select on the first day; the succeeding dinners have been entirely *en famille*, and elegantly social, and would have proved delightful to me had my heart been at ease.

" Yesterday evening, at the desire of Lord Herbert, his lady favoured us with a charming Italian duet, in which Seraphina bore a part that displayed her vocal powers to the highest advantage, while she performed a doubly difficult task, by accompanying herself on the piano-forte in an admirable manner. In saying she seemed to me to equal the surprising musical talents of my dear sister, I think I bestow an exalted eulogium on both.

" At Wilmot's solicitation, Serephina touched the mandoline, and sung to its dulcet accords a Spanish air with such bewitching taste, and true

pathos of expression, that the sounds even of a language unknown to me affected me deeply. The tones of her voice breathe sentiment, and her looks, with all the softness of a Madonna beauty, sink into the heart. The animated, yet tenderly gentle, sensations of her enthusiastic mind beam in the radiance of her eyes, dark and piercing, though admirably sweet; while the long silken lashes with which their dazzling brilliancy is shaded, and the engaging smile that plays in their beamy lustre, give them a fascinating languishment, creating a fire in every beholder's soul: but the flame thus kindled in mine, though ardent, is pure as the virgin mind of Seraphina, whence my sensibility springs and receives its character. I gaze in chaste admiration, nor ever sully her idea with a thought her maiden delicacy would blush to know.

"As I fixed my eyes on her last night while she played and sung, Wilmot seemed rivetted, like me, in raptures with her beauty; and remarked to me, with a lover's accurate observation, the jet-black mole on her left cheek, placed near her eye by Nature's unerring taste, as if to draw attention to her most perfect work: that mole, contrasted with the bloom it heightens, and the polish of a temple and forehead, where inimitable beauty is

enthroned, completes an expression of countenance that enchains admiration stronger at each glance, entrancing the soul of the beholder in irresistible enchantment.

" But it is not by looks alone Seraphina captivates and holds her sway, for her every movement displays a soul celestial as her personal charms are perfect. Yet, why do I dwell on their enumeration? Do not Wilmot's rights forbid a theme to me his fortunate title claims alone? I will infringe on propriety no more: Wilmot's presence interrupts the farther transgression of prudence, perhaps, of honour!"

Nov. 9.

" WILMOT's entrance yesterday morning made me hastily throw aside the pen, and left me too much agitated to admit of my resuming it to dispatch this immediately after his departure.

" In a state of mind little short of distraction, I sit down to give you, my dear Erina, some account of the cause of my misery, if I can be sufficiently collected to frame a coherent narrative for your information.

" My friend had not been many minutes with me, before I found he had called to take leave of me, on a sudden determination to quit London. On my interrogating him relative to the reason of a resolve apparently extraordinary, he informed me he had a secret plan to execute, of which he would give me an account by letter; and after some conversation on the subject of separation, which seemed to affect him deeply, he rose abruptly, and bid me farewell in the most touching manner.

" Shortly after Wilmot had left me, I received a letter from him, which discovered to me, in spite of his delicate desire to conceal it from me, that I have been the cause of occurrences which may, which certainly will, occasion misery to my dearest friend, and to every individual of my benefactor's family.

" Oh! Erina, there is torment, even madness, in the idea that Wilmot's friendship for me becomes the source of unhappiness to him; and that his kindness, by which I owed my introduction to a generous patron, has fated me to be the murderer of that patron's felicity; and that the same dagger by which I am destined to stab his peace, assassinates the youth whose confidence opened to

me the bosom of tenderest amity, and who still, in the agonies of the cruel death I inflict, presses me with all the ardour of forgiveness to his heart, whilst he feels acutely the wounds by which I have lacerated it!

" Torture, distraction accompany these ideas, and tear my soul to atoms. I can write no more. Erina, I dare not even reflect on my situation.

" Oh! my sister, may you never, never experience horrors equal to those I endure! No, Erina! far different is your fate: you, my sweet sister, enjoy the delightful privilege of consoling your friend, of making her chief happiness. Blessed office! divine occupation! and fitted to form the supreme felicity of a soul angelic as yours. Long, long may you taste the bliss of making the amiable Lady Kinross happy as I wish her from my soul!

" Her idea, and the remembrance of my sister's enjoyments in the works of virtue, tranquillize my thoughts; not to ease, but to that calm state of suffering the desponding maniac feels when the paroxysm of infuriated distraction has, by its extreme violence, exhausted him to a condition of

quiet, but an agonizing sensation of sorrow, that fixes him in all the sadness of despair.

"I know not what, nor how I have written; neither dare I trust myself to peruse the account I have endeavoured to give you of my situation, and my friend's intentions. To inform you of them better than I can attempt, and to render justice to a character which is best delineated by the sentiments that constitute a perfection surpassing my best powers of description, I shall inclose Wilmot's letter for your perusal, with a copy of my answer to it, in which you will learn all you may be anxious to know respecting the affair that plunges me in misery.

"Once more, my sister, farewell!

"C. O'C. O'BRIEN."

(Letter inclosed in the foregoing.)

FROM WILMOT TO O'BRIEN.

"My dearest friend,

"As I called on you this morning to bid you a long adieu, perhaps a last farewell, I found my-

self too deeply affected by my errand to discuss the reasons for a resolution, which, although it seem sudden to you, has long been the subject of my reflections, and was decided on in my mind since the day we dined together in St. James's-square. On that day I made an important discovery, which fixed a determination nothing can ever induce me to alter; on that day I discovered the state of your heart, my dear O'Brien, learned the true situation of Miss Herbert's, perceived myself an obstacle to your mutual felicity, and found the painful sacrifice you were both nobly resolved to make for my sake, and I vowed to use every effort to unite you, by convincing you I have no right that could supersede your just claims.

" I have already informed Miss Herbert, that I declined taking advantage of the flattering licence her father had given me to address her; aware I could make no claim to that pretension, as I was sensible that indulgence could be granted me only through the generosity of Lord Herbert, and that the same sentiment, united with the delicacy and sweetness that characterize his amiable daughter, might lead her to bestow on me her hand in compliance with her parent's desire. These ideas had determined me against addressing Miss Herbert before I had the pleasure of being introduced to

her. As she has informed me you are acquainted with all the particulars of her history, I feel myself called upon to explain circumstances which the delicacy of my guardian's family may have concealed from you, respecting my situation in it. The exposition of my affairs, which false pride might wish to hide, will not wound mine; for although I have spirit, and feel that spirit inherent in me, I consider it no degradation to avow myself an entire dependant on the bounty of Lord Herbert. I should rather think myself mean in wishing to conceal the whole truth, which is, that I am indebted to the benevolence and charity of his lordship's family for my situation in it.

"Intruded on the notice of pity when I was an orphaned child, almost an infant, helpless and forlorn, the compassion of the late lord received me into his house, where I was preserved from the miseries awaiting an infant, thrown by unfortunate circumstances destitute on the attention of strangers. In Lord Herbert's family I found kind protectors—in our noble colonel I found a father's attentions. He sought to discover in me dispositions capable of cultivation; he encouraged all my boyish efforts to learn the rudiments of a genteel education; the benevolence of his heart prompted him to believe me endued with great abilities,

and he prevailed on his father to bestow on me the best instruction. Even in my childhood I was sensible of my obligations to Colonel Herbert's fostering kindness, and an ardent desire to become worthy of his hopes rendered me indefatigable in the most strenuous efforts to acquire whatever his partiality to me had induced him to pronounce me capable of attaining. To him, therefore, I must ever feel myself indebted for a mind eager in the pursuit of knowledge, and anxiously intent on following the bright example which he set me of every exalted virtue.

" Little has yet been in my power to perform: My actions have been greatly overvalued: in order to prove this, I am compelled to a disagreeable office, namely, that of mentioning the faults of the late Lord Herbert; to whose memory I am too gratefully attached to revert without self-condemnation, even in thought, to the slightest reflection on the errors that detracted from the merits of his character; they were great, and may rescue from severe censure those blemishes of his temper, I would wish to believe, died in the grave where his remains moulder. Perhaps those failings induced by corporeal sufferings, which may extenuate, though they cannot justify, the foibles of bad humour, are attached more to our mortal than im-

mortal part, and therefore sleep in the coffin with the inanimate clay, daring no longer to encumber the spirit when it mounts for judgment into those regions destined for its future existence. Since the Great Divinity can *pardon* human error, we are bound to excuse it.

" Forgive this digression, my dear O'Brien, and place it to the account of my wish to shield from your entire condemnation the character of a late benefactor, whom I am obliged to mention, since called on to declare facts, in order to disprove any claim you may imagine I have to the gratitude of the present Lord Herbert; which, being established, as I can make it still more evident, it will follow as a natural consequence, I can pretend to no right to Miss Herbert's hand. And this being clear, your pretensions to her heart need not, neither shall they through any fault on my part, be sacrificed to false conceptions of circumstances, and your mistaken ideas of delicacy in sentiment.

" As you perceive my situation in the world gives me no title to the connection proposed to me by Lord Herbert's affectionate regard, I am now about to convince you, I have as little claim to the gratitude which his believing due to me,

prompted his lordship to all the noble offers accompanying that of his daughter's hand.

" I was indebted to the late lord for my admission into his house ; but whilst I remember that act of kindness with the utmost thankfulness, I cannot forget, neither can I cease to reflect with the highest gratitude, that I owed my situation in his lordship's family to the favour of his amiable son; who, instead of considering me as an intruder, regarded me as his child. Initiated by him into a taste for those acquirements which constitute a liberal education, I am ultimately obliged to him for my position in society. Had it not been my fortunate lot to have been fostered by his benevolence, to have been encouraged by his compassion, and to have been instructed by his care and attention, I should, most probably, have fallen a miserable victim to early want; or, instead of being introduced into consequence in the world by his protection and patronage, have lived an outcast, amidst all the distresses of poverty, all the horrors of infamy, to die in shame, and perish for ever!

" Oh! kindest, best, noblest of benefactors, I am the child of thy pity! Can that heart, bound to thee by inestimable benefit, ever forget my in-

mense debts to thee? or is it possible the filial allegiance of my whole life—even its sacrifice, could reimburse the favours I have received from thee—those favours above all appreciation, great, and innumerable as thy virtues?

"Oh! my parent,—my more than father, my tutelary angel! when I forget my obligations to thee, may Heaven become unmindful of me! if ever I be so ungrateful as to imagine I have *repaid* thy kindness sufficiently to make me cease to consider myself still thy debtor, may Providence withdraw its blessings from me!

"But let me resume my narrative, to shew you, my dear O'Brien, how much I owe Lord Herbert, and how little he owes to me.

"The late lord, with many good qualities, and a towering genius, had a severe disposition and harsh manners. Impressed by my obligations to him, I trembled in his presence, and should have shrunk, depressed, from his favours, had not the suavity of the present lord's temper taught me to bear, and sheltered me from the moroseness of his father's. I knew from experience, as well as observation, the hardships my best of friends suffered from his parent's rigour: I saw the stern

unbending temper of Lord Herbert towards his son; and my gratitude, so due to the latter, prompted me to watch over his interest as assiduously as his benevolence had instigated him to promote my welfare, without my having any right to expect such favours from him.

" Sensible as I was, even from my boyhood, of all my weight of obligation to him, it was impossible for me to act inconsistently with those sentiments I had imbibed from his instruction; yet, in performing an incumbent duty, the merit, if any, was merely negative; the conferring an obligation, situated as I was, became impossible.

" As you are acquainted, I understand, with the consequences of the present Lord Herbert's marriage, and have learned the part I bore in late events, which I should have wished, had it been practicable, concealed from my benefactors knowledge; I feel anxious to convince you, my dear O'Brien, his lordship is not indebted to me, as his generous disposition induces him to think and declare.

" In the rejection of a fortune, to the smallest portion of which I could have no right, although it was bequeathed to me by the caprice of a mind

under the influence of an erroneous displeasure, which gratified its unreasonable anger in the disinheritance of an innocent son, I can have no merit. Had the *natural* inheritor of that property been my bitterest enemy and mortal foe, instead of being my best benefactor, my more than father, I should have been bound by morality to act as I have done; which was, to repair an injury committed against the victims of cruelty, as the power to do it was in my hands.

" Although law would have supported me in reversing justice, by giving me legal claims to possessions conferred on me by will; yet the principles of equity and religion, superior to human institutions, enlightened my mind with the divine rays of *truth;* by whose radiance I am instructed, that to retain, without any right, what worldly forms alone could confirm to me, would be to act dishonestly. In relinquishing, therefore, the property naturally devolving on Lord Herbert, he ought not to feel obliged to me, because I have done nothing but justice to *myself* in refusing to act a villainous part, by usurping property on which I had no claim. To have done otherwise than I did, would have stamped infamy upon my character in this world, and registered in Heaven my eternal condemnation; because I could not have

retained the smallest portion of that fortune, which was Lord Herbert's by nature's decree, without confirming myself a mercenary wretch, devoid of integrity, a barbarous plunderer, and the most atrociously ungrateful monster.

" I have no claim to Lord Herbert's thanks—I have no demand even on his kindness, except what his goodness is willing to acknowledge; benevolence alone can attach him to me, as eternal gratitude must ever bind me to him.

" Thus circumstanced, ought I, can I consent to live a weight upon his generosity—a burthensome load on the tenderness of Lady Herbert—an obstacle to the felicity of their beloved child? No —far, far be such unworthy, such base intentions from my mind!

" I learn from the amiable mother of the nobly virtuous Miss Herbert, that her resolution is fixed on a life of celibacy, and of monastic seclusion, should she survive her parents: and it becomes easy for me to divine, that the cause of such determination originates in a desire of securing to me the reversion of her grandfather's fortune; which I have discovered by her conversation, she con-

siders a just compensation for the affection I have evinced for her father.

"Heaven forbid I should thus become the cause of a most cruel sacrifice of beauty and of love! No, Seraphina — thy incomparable loveliness, thy matchless sweetness, thy warmly tender heart, thy refinement of sentiment, thy enthusiasm of soul, which I perceive has made an indelible impression on O'Brien's heart, shall reward the virtue of my friend, and bless him as he merits!

"Yes! O'Brien, brother of my soul---I have made this vow to my affection for thee and Seraphina; I have sworn by friendship and by honour to act consistently with both, towards thee and that amiable maid, who has inspired thee with a passion worthy of thy exalted mind, and the refined delicacy of her's. Believe me, I could neither live nor die in peace, were I to fail in my intention of contributing to the felicity of beings so formed for each other, and so dear to my heart.

"Believing I have now clearly proved to you, by an unreserved confession of my situation, that I ought not to make those addresses to my bene-

factor's daughter, which cannot be grounded on any pretension, it remains for me now to assure you I neither can, nor ever will solicit a hand on which your claims are great, since your whole soul is devoted to Miss Herbert. That you are the object of her highest esteem, I can pronounce. The instant I made these discoveries, I resolved to inform you of every circumstance that could tend to convince you there was no obstacle that your most refined sentiments could oppose to the offer of your hand.

" May Heaven propitiate your suit! Believe me, my friend, your happiness and Seraphina's is equally dear to me; I am as anxious for it as for my own, and rest my hopes of my own happiness on your mutual felicity.

" With respect to myself, I have a p an in view that gives me hopes of a genteel independence; to attain which I demand your assistance. But before I disclose my project, I conjure you to strict secrecy; and, believing myself secured of it by your honour, I proceed to entrust you with my intentions.

" I evince my reliance on your friendship, as much as I prove my confidence in your honour,

by requesting of you, my dear O'Brien, a pecuniary loan. The nobly generous offer of sharing your purse with me, induces me to solicit this favour necessary to the execution of my scheme; which is to purchase a commission I am in treaty about, in a regiment under orders to embark for the eastern hemisphere. The peace just established between England and the beligerent powers, makes me turn my thoughts to that quarter of the globe, where, in the service of my king in the fields of Asia, I can have many opportunities of reaping laurels, whilst I may rapidly rise to the highest rank, and an honourable sufficiency of fortune, in my noble profession. This prospect gratifies my ambition, at the same time that it inspires a hope that the military career may lead me to affluence, without making me, either at present or hereafter, a burthen on Lord Herbert's generosity, or any incumberance on the munificence of his lady and daughter. How greatly I am indebted to their unbounded liberality, I have gloried in confessing; but whilst I feel grateful for the benefits their bounty has already heaped upon me, and purposes to shower on me now and in future, I experience extreme reluctance to hang upon their kindness.

"I possess a high spirit, although I have hitherto lived a life of total dependance. In that

humble station I have felt perfectly contented, since it was the will of Heaven I should be thrown entirely unprovided on the pity of the world. I should have been impious to arraign Providence for my lowly state, even had I not been blessed, as I have been, by the best gifts celestial compassion could bestow on an orphan child. Had I suffered all the miseries of poverty, I should, I trust, have submitted with christian resignation to the Divine hand, that, in my misfortunes, would perhaps have punished with justice the faults of those to whom I owed my birth.

" But I must moralize no longer. Time hastens towards the hour of my departure from London. My heart sinks at the approach of my separation from those I love; but at the same time my mind is fortified by the idea, that I owe this effort to them, to myself, to virtue!

" Neither Lord Herbert nor any of my acquaintance besides you, my dear O'Brien, know the least about my plan. My kind benefactor and his amiable family would endeavour to dissuade me from it; but my resolution is fixed: and I should grieve to act in direct opposition to the advice of a patron, whose judgment has hitherto guided every step of my life. When my scheme

has advanced beyond the possibility of retraction, I shall acquaint Lord Herbert with my situation; and I am certain he will not blame me when he knows the numerous urgent reasons for my determination.

"In the secrecy of my plan you will find the motive for my borrowing the sum it will require in the execution, from you, my dear O'Brien, instead of requesting it from my Lord Herbert. His liberality would lavish any thing on me; but I have laid down a rule never to make a pecuniary demand on him to a great amount, and could not think of drawing on his liberality for any sum without informing his lordship of the use to which I purposed to apply it.

"I do not mean this as an apology for my asking you to perform an office of kindness, neither will I offend your refinement of sentiment in offering any security for the reimbursement of a debt which our friendship will settle: your affection will trust my honour. Should your assistance acquire me riches, I may then afford to repay your kindness with compound interest:—but should I fall on the field like a poor soldier, assure yourself, my beloved comrade, that the last sigh of your brother in arms will be breathed in

prayers for the felicity of those who contributed to his happiness—and, in the remembrance of his benefactors, friendship's warmest sentiments will dwell on the idea of O'Brien. Friend of my heart, farewell!

"FREDERIC WILMOT."

COPY OF A LETTER FROM O'BRIEN TO WILMOT.

"THE abrupt disclosure of your intention to leave town, my dearest friend, left me extremely dejected at your departure; but the letter revealing that we had parted for years, perhaps for ever, as you tell me, has depressed me to the lowest state of spirits.

"Notwithstanding the efforts your noble soul has made to conceal from me that your resolutions have originated in motives unconnected with me. I feel, however, distracted at the idea, the certainty of occasioning events destructive to your felicity, my dear Wilmot, and to the happiness of our benefactors, whose delight you were so calculated to promote.

"Alas! I must ever mourn over the misery my introduction to you causes. Had it not been for my acquaintance with you and Lord Herbert, he

would rejoice in the completion of the projected union between his beloved daughter and the adopted son of his affection; for you would not then have felt, as your romantic heroism now induces you to believe, that there is more exalted virtue in rejecting than accepting the offered blessing of Miss Herbert's hand.

"It is not possible, Wilmot, that a heart, tender as your's has proved itself, could remain insensible to the evident impression your virtues have made on a soul, alive as Seraphina's is, to my knowledge, to all your perfections. Gently kind to every being, her complaisance to me has misled you to suppose her partial to me; whilst I, with better discernment than modesty in this instance allows you to exercise, perceive she distinguishes my dearest friend with uncommonly soft attentions, that mark he has already made the most flattering progress in her affections: and permit me to observe, your delicacy, my dear Wilmot, commits a great offence against sentiment in suggesting a conduct calculated to distress beyond measure, rather than afford the smallest pleasure to those friends for whom you profess such strong attachment, and who you acknowledge return it with infinite tenderness.

" The office of friendship is to admonish, advise, and even to reprove with severity, when any hope can be entertained that admonition, counsel, or reproaches, may avail to prevent the actions we believe cannot fail of producing incalculable evil and grief to those we love. Awake, Wilmot, at my call, from the infatuation of deluded opinion, ere it be too late to lament the unhappiness you are about to occasion your friends---ere it be too late to regret the melancholy you cause to prey on the soul of him who loves you as a brother!

" You can be but little acquainted with the character of O'Brien, if you for an instant suppose he could be capable of supplanting you, even were it practicable, in the affection so justly your due: you should have done more justice to my feelings, than to believe them so depraved as to enjoy a supreme felicity purchased at the expence of delicacy, or the least portion of your happiness.

" Wilmot, I call Heaven to witness when I swear by the purity of friendship, I could never offer my hand, even to a being I adored to madness, were I under the slightest suspicion, that in so doing I infringed your privileges. No, my friend, you have every power over me except that

of persuading me that you and Miss Herbert are indifferent to each other, and of tempting me to deviate from every honourable sentiment in exiling you from a delightful home, which affection had rendered your parental roof. And I vow, by all a soldier holds most dear, never to usurp that place which is your's by right of *merit*, whose claims must ever be considered equal to those of nature. For example, are not our minds bound together by congeniality of sentiment, in more harmonious unison than if fraternal ties alone had connected us? Yes! brother of my heart! your's will not, cannot deny this truth. Learn, therefore, from your claims to my brotherly attachment, your just rights in the family where you are loved as a son. Cement that title, Wilmot, by legitimate and religious bonds---and become, as formerly, my friend, in conferring on me the happiness of being instrumental to your felicity; for, know and remember, I have taken a solemn oath to promote it, and shall live and die in misery if I fail in this obligation and first wish of my heart!

"Friendship, hallowed and ever sacred to me, demands I should grant whatever you require of my honour. It shall not fail in secrecy respecting the trust you have reposed in it. After the offer I have, in sincerity, made of sharing with you to

the last farthing, that affluence with which Heaven has blessed me, I have no power to revoke a promise registered in eternal records by the angel of truth, who watches over the fulfilment of sacred engagements. All you can require of my fortune must be your's; draw on it, therefore, to any amount whenever you please. I shall instantly desire the sum you want to be paid to your order; but I trust it will be applied to other purposes than you intended.

"The utmost indulgence of my affectionate esteem cannot justify you in taking the step you purpose in your situation; for I think your benefactor has an indisputable right to guide you with a father's authority, since he has ever evinced for you a parent's affection and solicitude. Let the filial duty, therefore, you feel owing from you to your friend Lord Herbert, deter you from deserting his protection. Attached as you are to each other, separation will grieve you both most sensibly:—your heart, my dear Wilmot, is warm as his lordship's; and nothing can afford a better proof that you were formed to live inseparable companions, than your similarity of disposition: equally generous, and nobly disinterested, you are mutually emulous of obliging, and reciprocally enthusiastic ingratitude.

" Lord Herbert's conduct towards you has, indeed, been most amiable, and demanded the return you made; yet, the merit of his lordship's behaviour does not detract from the virtue of your character, which gives you every claim to become his son.

" Let me conjure you, Wilmot, by every thing tender in affection, and sacred in friendship, to beware of making me feel, in the contingency of events, that I have signed the death-warrant of my friend. Oh! Wilmot! my brother in affection and profession, ere you close an engagement to exile yourself to the malignant climes of Asia, so fatal to the European soldier when his duty calls him to the tented field, parched by a vertical sun, to suffer more than the dangers of war, — think that you have a comrade in arms, whose chief happiness consists in the idea of living your constant associate, of dying beside a faithful and inseparable friend—remember this, my dearest Wilmot; and may Heaven direct and bless thee, ever prays thine, most faithfully,

" C. O' C. O'Brien."

Erina, and her gentle friend Rosaline, mingled their sighs as they bedewed these letters with their tears, which fell to the sorrows of Charles.

" How I pity the griefs of my poor brother!" ejaculated Erina. " The sufferings of Wilmot," sighed Lady Kinross, " equally move my heart. Glorious youth!" she cried, with enthusiastic energy, " thou art above humanity"——A blush concluded the sentence.

Erina, immediately on the receipt of O'Brien's packet, hurried off an epistle to him, full of the tenderness and sympathy that her brother's situation inspired. She also employed herself in writing to Seraphina; and whilst Rosaline was occupied in fulfilling this duty of friendship, intelligence arrived from the south of France, by an express to the Count St. Amand, who immediately acquainted his niece that Madame de Briançon was no more.

Shocked at this unexpected information, the tender heart of Rosaline experienced more grief for the loss of the viscountess than could have been supposed from her recent acquaintance with that relation. The news of her death was accompanied by an account of her son's recovery from the fever she had caught in attending him, and which had proved suddenly fatal to her. Lady Kinross learned that the viscount was expected in Paris as soon as he was sufficiently re-established in strength to

bear a journey to the metropolis. She was sincerely glad to hear her cousin's life had been spared, although she believed her uncle, the count, would exert his influence over her in favour of his nephew's addresses:—and she was soon confirmed in this idea by the count's desire that she would leave the convent for his house, as the Viscount de Briançon was soon expected in Paris.

The invitation to the Count St. Amand's was made with such politeness to Erina, and Rosaline expressed so much anxiety for the company of her beloved friend, that she found it impossible to refuse the united solicitations to make the Hotel St. Amand her abode for some time.

Shortly after their leaving the convent, a letter arrived from Seraphina, to inform her beloved friends, that accounts had been received from Donna Isabella, stating a piteous relation of the declining health of the Duke de Las Estrellas; and that as his end was quickly approaching, he had been seized with such remorse at the recollection of his cruel conduct towards his daughters, Violante and Dorothea, that it had been found expedient to acquaint him with the situation of Lady Herbert: in consequence of which her father, the duke, had entreated to see her and her daughter, that he

might bless them before he died, and make all the reparation in his power to his only remaining child. Seraphina added, that this intelligence communicated by the amiable Donna Isabella, had made Lord Herbert resolve to hasten to Madrid with his family, and that they were then on the eve of sailing for Spain; whence she would take an early opportunity of writing to her beloved friends.

As this letter bore nearly the same date of O'Brien's to his sister, and mentioned, with regret, the speedily approaching departure of Sir Phelim's family from England, without communicating any intelligence respecting Wilmot, about whom the two amiable girls were extremely interested, they conjectured that Seraphina remained ignorant of his intention of quitting Europe for the territory of Asia; and Rosaline and Erina lamented over the probability that Lord Herbert's visit to Spain would leave Wilmot at full liberty to execute that romantic project, which might lead him into extreme danger, from an unhealthy, and often a mortal climate, and by his early decease, leave all his friends to mourn the untimely fate of a youth, whose virtues endeared him to every heart.

The two affectionate girls often devoted the

tenderest thoughts and best wishes to their travelling friends, whose absence seemed to attach the soul of Rosaline and Erina in closer bonds. They now, more than ever, considered each other, not only as of the same country, but as sisters in a kingdom where, amongst a numerous acquaintance, they found themselves surrounded by beings in every respect differing widely, not only from their own manners, but almost directly opposite in character.

Nothing disgusted their delicacy so much as that spirit of gallantry amongst the French, which rendered intrigues so common and so licensed between married persons: and, in the prospect of Rosaline's union with her cousin, nothing shocked her refinement of mind, and her rigid principles, more than the certainty that the viscount would not consider fidelity to his nuptial vows as any part of his duty; and that she herself, however decorous her behaviour might be, would be subject to impertinent advances, from the prevalence of vicious modes: and that even in preserving her virtue unsullied, her delicacy might be wounded, since she could scarcely flatter herself she should be fortunate enough to secure her reputation against slander, or the suspicion of her conduct being equally free as that of most women of high rank in France;

where avowed and admitted adorers, like *rouge*, were the almost necessary appendages of a fashionable toilette, and considered equally important, as admissible in morality. Although Rosaline used no art in the decoration of her person, she was far from thinking the care about appearance and a moderate attention to dress at all wrong, especially in a married woman, whose duty it became to render herself agreeable in the eyes of the man whom it was equally her interest, as it should be her study to please. She thought that a decorous conformity to fashion might excuse *rouge*, and she believed, that in compliance with the desire, or even the taste, of the viscount, she might be induced to heighten her complexion; but she felt that no licence, example, or persuasion, could ever reconcile her to, or lead her to adopt manners of freedom, for which her education, as well as her sentiments, gave her the greatest repugnance. Frequently she gloried in her country—and often, daily, hourly, lamented her being torn from it for ever. "Blessed and happy kingdom," cried Rosaline, emphatically, "land of freedom and of wisdom, long mayest thou flourish pre-eminent in virtue as great in power and high in fame! May thy government continue unimpaired in lustre, to crown Britannia's loyal sons with wreaths of patriotic glory, gained in thy august senate by su-

perior knowledge and eloquence; won on the wide extended dominion of thy royal navy, by heroic and unequalled intrepidity; reaped on the field of renown by the warrior's sword with invincible valour; and obtained in thy sublime church by doctrines of purest faith and exalted piety! And may thy fair daughters, Britain, refined in elegance as exquisite in beauty, ever arrayed in the charming veil of modesty, shine bright examples of every feminine grace and virtue to surrounding nations!"

Erina had not long left the convent when she received a short melancholy letter from her brother, by which she learned the safe arrival of her beloved family at Glenrock.

O'Brien mentioned no particulars respecting his friends in England. He dwelt on his extreme depression of spirits; assuring his sister her affection was his chief consolation in afflictive circumstances, and that he had no prospect of happiness except in the idea of seeing her again; and in the meanwhile, arranging his affairs at Castle Dermot, in such a manner, as to render his tenants industrious, flourishing, and good, by institutions to that effect, which he should leave under the direction and superintendence of his worthy grandfather, and amiable mother, when professional duty

called him from his native home. Every sentence in the letter evinced a heart oppressed by grief; and Erina earnestly longed to be near her brother, to comfort him in the dejection which sympathy made her own: she forbore, however, from delicacy, to hint her desire of returning home, aware that was an event which could not take place until after the marriage of her friend, of which she knew her dread; and she therefore abstained from the most distant allusion that could awaken Rosaline to think of that time, in which she anticipated nothing but unhappiness.

Shortly after the receipt of Charles's letter, Erina received one from Father Murphy, wherein he demanded a confession of faith from her. The priest had, with a great degree of displeasure, heard Mrs. O'Brien expatiate on the spiritual advantage her daughter was likely to obtain in the nunnery. His jealousy was excited at the idea that the confirmation of his late pupil in the Roman Catholic religion, might be attributed solely to the lady abbess, and to the friars attendant on the convent, where she had been placed without his advice having been consulted on the occasion; and anxious to arrogate to himself some merit and praise relative to her spiritual concerns, which had formerly been entrusted to his care, he now, under

a pretence of pious zeal and affection for Erina, resumed the office of her director, and even confessor; and with all the craft of his base character, framed his exhortations and interrogations in such a manner as to stagger, rather than confirm in the Popish worship and doctrines, one who had been inclined to deviate from, rather than embrace them in preference to Protestantism.

The guileless Erina perceived not the real intent of this letter; nor, had she been aware of Murphy's cunning, was her innocent mind fitted to cope with, or parry the deep arts of a man, whom a depraved nature, low situation, and powerful temptations, originating in poverty of circumstances, had rendered as deeply designing as he was consummately artful.

In reply to the priest's letter of inquisitorially scrutinizing examination, Erina, with equal modesty and candour, confessed herself yet unsettled in some tenets established as dogmas in the Romish church. She was, indeed, convinced, this avowal of her opinions and sentiments would subject her to the severest censures of the harsh Father Murphy; but she felt herself obliged to declare facts, and preferred the consciousness of unsullied truth, whatever penalties it might cost

her, to the favour of a man she feared instead of esteemed; and whilst she trembled at the expectation of his anathemas, of which she knew all the violence from the sufferings his acrimony had inflicted on her in a former similar occasion, she felt that *it must be impossible for a mind of integrity to deviate from rectitude; which teaches, that to mislead, respecting our opinion, or even to conceal it when desired to declare it, is, at best, meanly wrong, and may be highly criminal: for, although there can be no necessity to reveal our sentiments voluntarily, yet when we are called on to explain them without reserve, morality then requires strict sincerity as the criterion of truth, too sacredly enjoined christians as a religious obligation, to be even tacitly infringed by prevarication, subterfuge, or evasion.*

CHAP. III.

"Righteousness alone can condemn with strict justice; and since the Supreme Author of all good pardons innumerable crimes committed against his high Majesty, by the ingratitude of his sinful creatures, they are bound to forgive each other mutual offences, to entitle themselves to that mercy which is promised to christian charity."

ROSALINE and her friend had not long been inhabitants of the Hotel St. Amand, when the former discovered, from the secret confusion of the chevalier, that he was most deeply enamoured of the beautiful Erina. The innocent girl herself, unconscious of her own charms as unsuspicious of the strong impression they had made on the fancy of Rosaline's youthful cousin, was equally surprised and shocked at the intelligence of Lady Kinross; who joined in thinking with her, that

delicacy, honour, and morality bound them to the discouragement of a passion, which could not be listened to without an infringement of every principle which refinement of sentiment, propriety of conduct, and integrity of mind, should consider, not only as points of decorum, but of religion itself, which links each social and pious duty in an inseparable chain.

" I have assured the chevalier," said Rosaline, " that my sweet friend's heart would be invulnerable against illicit vows."

" Certainly," cried Erina, with eagerness;— " were I even prepossessed with the tenderest sentiments towards the count's son, I should remember that my obligations for his polite hospitality, the consideration I owe the confidence of Antoinette, and still more, the respect I ought to feel for my own character, forbid my acting in opposition to the laws of moral rectitude. As the chevalier has never, even in an indirect manner, disclosed to me feelings I must condemn, I think there would be a glaring impropriety in my opening on such a delicate subject to him, even by a message through you, my beloved Rosaline, whom esteem and confidence render our mutual and intimate friend: I feel, however, there would

be equal indecorum in my remaining any longer the inmate of a family where my presence may occasion unhappiness; and as I should never forgive myself for requiting unworthily the civilities of the Count and Countess St. Amand, by rendering their son both culpable and miserable in infidelity to Mademoiselle la Fontaine, I consider it a duty incumbent on me to retire from this abode to the convent. As a plausible excuse for this sudden resolution will be requisite, and as the true reason for my abrupt departure cannot, neither ought to be given, it occurs to me that there will be no breach of fact in mentioning, that I feel myself bound, by a religious obligation, to return to the nunnery."

Although Rosaline was grieved beyond expression at the idea of losing her beloved companion, aware the count would object to her retiring from his family with Erina, at the moment when the viscount was expected, and notwithstanding their separation at such a conjuncture became, if possible, doubly distressing; yet, that animated attachment which occasioned such feelings of acute sorrow at the prospect of this painful parting, inspired Rosaline with such force of fortitude as to acquiesce in Erina's leaving her, instead of endeavouring to oppose it; believing that friendship best

evinced its sincerity in sacrificing selfish interests to those of a friend.

Reduced thus to an unforeseen necessity of being divided, the affliction it caused both the amiable girls, though great, had not power to make either of them wish to relinquish a measure each thought an act of virtue; at whose hallowed shrine they would have sacrificed every enjoyment incompatible with it. They parted with many tears; consoled by the idea of submission to duty, and soothed by the hope of frequent interviews at the convent.

Agnes, though sincerely rejoiced to regain her loved companion, lamented the separation of the attached friend, grieving also for its occasion; which the refined delicacy of Erina would have wished concealed, but which Rosaline's prompted her disclosing to the good nun, fearful of being condemned by her tender heart, for permitting her beloved associate to return alone to the gloom of a convent; which she imagined Agnes might have judged unkind, and a dereliction of friendship, had she remained ignorant of the reasons that actuated their conduct in an affair where necessity had required steps that might have seemed to the nun dictated by caprice and diminished affection.

Erina, now the only British inhabitant of this monastic edifice, would have felt deserted and solitary indeed, had not the kind sister Agnes endeavoured to supply, by her constant assiduities, the pleasures lost by the absence of Lady Kinross. Her saloon, no longer cheered by her presence, or Seraphina's, became daily more drearily melancholy as the winter advanced; and in the height of November's gloom Erina's heart sunk here in solitude, unless the good nun, when liberated from the numerous duties her strict order imposed as daily almost hourly obligations, came, not to enliven the sorrowful girl, but to sympathize with her in the sad sensations of a situation dull in the extreme.

Rosaline, strict in the observance of friendship, performed every thing in her power to evince its steadiness and tenderness. She called daily on Erina; but seldom saw her alone, as the respect necessary on her part to the lady abbess, and the consideration of the superior to her late inmate, Lady Kinross, brought them always together; when the latter, in visiting her friend, felt herself under an obligation of enquiring for the abbess. Her presence repressed that mutual confidence and enthusiastic intercommunication of soul, which youthful, energetic hearts enjoy with rapturous

delight, as the testimony of a sincere, faithful, animated, and exalted friendship. Rosaline's mind had a thousand things to impart to Erina, and she had as many interrogations to make relative to her friend's situation, which the frigidly dignified deportment of the stately superior checked, as the chill breath of frost nips the vernal buds from disclosing, while it binds in icy chains the fountain which would otherwise play and refresh the verdure of its margin. The Countess St. Amand, and her daughter-in-law elect, frequently accompanied Lady Kinross to the convent; who, prevented thus any confidential conversation with Erina, commenced an epistolary intercourse with her soon after her separation.

By this means Rosaline communicated the intelligence of the viscount's arrival; and that, as she had anticipated, he was not a man calculated to make her happy. An additional expression of dejection on her sweet face, indicated an increased sensation of uneasiness, which demanded all the sympathy of Erina. This gentle girl herself was now no longer the gaily volatile creature, in whose eyes vivacity had so lately sparkled, on whose cheek the joy of youth bloomed brilliantly, whilst the rosy dimples of frequent smiles shewed a heart light as her manners were innocently sportive.

Tears now frequently stood tremulously lustrous on the long silky lashes of her bright eyes, and fell impearled upon the blush of agitation, while smiles of ineffable softness still sat upon her ruby lips, not, as formerly, descriptive of mirth, but bearing in them an expression more touching to the soul of sentiment, as it marked that her sensibility, though acute, was void of any impatience under extreme suffering. Notwithstanding her eager desires to revisit her dear native land, to be restored to the peaceful abode of the paternal dwelling, to be encircled by her loved relations, to be pressed to the maternal bosom, and to receive happiness in consoling a sorrowing brother, yet her considerate and tender affection for her fair friend prevented a wish for the completion of an event which must render Rosaline more miserable than she already appeared. Her letters at length communicated the unexpected information, that her uncle, the count, had assured her he should not press her union with his nephew, since it seemed contrary to her inclination; and that the viscount himself had liberated her from her engagement to him, at the earnest solicitation of the count. Rosaline, on this subject, thus expressed herself: "Surely I must be the most unreasonably capricious mortal breathing, to feel as I do on this occasion. Would you believe, my dear Erina, that I am so

silly as to dislike my cousin de Briançon the more for the coldness with which he addressed me, and the ease with which he relinquishes claims on me, that, by enforcing, would have plunged me in misery? I can only solve this enigma to myself by discovering, in a diligent examination of my heart, that I really mingle not the least pique with my disapprobation of the viscount: his indifference has not wounded my vanity; for certainly I have not the fault of coquetry, which delights in the base criminality of ensnaring a heart in a passion it means not to requite by any return. No, my friend, believe me untainted by that vice, to clear myself of which I am compelled to avow an absurdity, perhaps a great foible, and that is, a most romantic fastidiousness, that in me amounts to a serious error. My notions of love are so high-flown, beyond all reason and nature, as to make me think every man unworthy of notice, and even of esteem, who, pretending to be a lover, is insensible to the refined passion of that character. Had the viscount voluntarily declined offering me his hand, because I had failed to inspire him with sentiments sufficiently tender for a union for life, I should have valued him as a noble, delicate, and disinterested young man; but seeing his coldness by the facility with which he desisted from addresses that he would have persisted in paying,

had it not been for our uncle's interference, I have reason to believe de Briançon's soul a stranger to those refined and generous feelings we have agreed in thinking constituted the perfection of the exalted Wilmot's mind.

" And now, my Erina, since I am free of any engagement that renders the confession either indelicate or criminal, I am tempted to acknowledge a weakness even greater than romance carried to an extreme: this weakness is, a predilection so strong for Wilmot's character, that I should feel it impossible ever to join my destiny with any being who united not in himself the qualities which distinguish him.

" Sensible of my having formed notions respecting love and matrimony improbable to be realized, I am firmly resolved never to risk the danger of a disappointment in the choice of a lover. Henceforth, my Erina, I devote myself to friendship—yes, my dear girl, I purpose to live and die your maiden friend! In a state of celibacy, if not superlatively blessed, I shall at least escape all the misery my lively imagination pictures, must be attendant on an union uncemented by a perfect esteem, and the most enthusiastic affection, which would be requisite to my own happiness, and the

only means of ensuring that of a husband, whom, in accepting, I should feel it a duty incumbent on me to render superlatively blessed.

" Since your retreat to the convent, my beloved friend, I have been most anxious to restore you to the bosom of your family, because circumstances have cruelly denied me the felicity of enjoying your society with propriety at the Count St. Amand's. As my uncle knows I am bound, by a sacred engagement, to convey you to Ireland, he consents to my accompanying you thither, and has allowed me to accept Lady Margaret M'Pherson's invitation to join her travelling party, which is to leave Paris early in spring for London, whence she is to proceed to Dublin. Her ladyship is daughter to the Duke of Northallerton, and reckons herself my relation, on account of my grandmother's descent from that family. Although but distantly connected with her, I love her as a most amiable woman. She is married to the Honourable Mr. M'Pherson, who means to visit Ireland, on a tour of pleasure, with his sister, united to an agreeable gay Hibernian, Lord Leixlip.

" Since my introduction to them at the Duke la Fontaine's, I have been flattered by the highest marks of their regard. The whole party love you

from my description, and anticipate infinite pleasure in your joining me as their travelling companion. Lady Margaret and Mr. M'Pherson laugh, and tell me they will never consent to part from me, and that I must live with them as their adopted daughter."

Rosaline, now relieved from a state of painful anxiety, resumed all the playful vivacity which had formerly rendered her charmingly engaging; and Erina, rejoicing in the peace her dear friend experienced, felt herself relieved from some portion of uneasiness. She now permitted herself to talk with delight of returning to her dear native country; and expressed her eager wishes of rejoining her beloved brother, to console him, and raise his spirits, by her affectionate efforts to enliven the scenes of Glenrock, anticipating with joy the pleasure her family would receive from the presence of her friend.

Erina's pleasing prospect was, however, soon overcast by a dark cloud, which, spreading a gloom around, threatened a tremendous storm. A letter from Father Murphy, full of the bitterest invective, informed her, that as a punishment for her abominable heresy, she must remain in exile, without a hope of returning to her relations, until

she had solemnly abjured the blasphemous errors she dared to entertain and confess, relative to the holy mother church. Following this severe denunciation, the priest drew up a catalogue of Popish articles of faith, to which he required her entire and formal assent; on which condition alone she could obtain a release from the convent. Murphy had found, by a letter from Erina to her brother, which had been read in the family as a general address, that she was impatiently anxious to return to the paternal mansion; and the artful priest assured her mother it would be the best, perhaps the only means, of effecting his pupil's confirmation in the Romish faith, to make her positive subscription to its doctrines a condition of her rejoining her friends, as it was an event too ardently and eagerly desired to admit of her delaying it by refractory perseverance. The priest now prided himself on the discovery of an excellent expedient, by which he could arrogate entirely the whole glory of Erina's conversion from a state of reprobation;—and flattering himself it would be equally attributed to him as a merit in Heaven, as in the sight of her mother, he felt convinced of ensuring by it not only the approbation of Providence, but his undoubted claim to unceasing gratitude from Mrs. O'Brien for the salvation of her child; and that, in consequence of it,

he should be canonized in her opinion, and thus obtain the most unbounded sway over both mother and daughter, till the latest period of his life; or, in case of outliving them, gain a very considerable bequest for important services.

On the receipt of Father Murphy's address, Erina saw misery impending, which it was equally impossible for her to terminate as avoid; for her soul was too steady in adherence to virtue to warp from its dictates through interested motives; her principles were too pure to permit her to purchase any enjoyment, or shun any suffering, at the high price of sacrificing that undeviating rectitude which told her peremptorily, she must neither yield up opinions she firmly believed strictly right, nor deceitfully feign conviction of the propriety of what appeared to her judgment erroneous.

Deeply grieved, yet resolute in conscious integrity, the afflicted girl took up her pen, not to address the severe confessor, but her gentle mother. Under the guidance of her best judgment, and the inspiration of exquisite sensibility, radiant truth, and exalted piety, the charming Erina wrote a letter so replete with sentiment, so strikingly just, so marked with virtue, that it was calculated to touch the hardest heart with acute feeling, to

convince the most profound understanding of the correctness of her sense, and to impress every mind with the pre-eminent virtue of her's. With firmness, tempered by extreme respect and sweetness of expression, she avowed herself absolutely unable to subscribe to a tenet in the Romish church, that appeared to her contrary to the true spirit and fundamental principle of our blessed Saviour's doctrine, which breathed his own divine nature in all its celestial beneficence. She said she could not help thinking the church of Rome assumed an unwarrantable licence, in pronouncing decidedly the eternal condemnation of every christian sect that did not conform to every minute article of the Popish credence and worship: she avowed herself shocked at such an uncharitable supposition, and confessed that, instead of subscribing to it, she cherished the hope, and even a trust, that every sincere believer in the Redeemer's atonement might be, through infinite mercy, acceptable to the Almighty Father of his creatures.

This letter, so calculated to make an impression on maternal love, had all the effect which it might have been expected to produce on the mild nature of Mrs. O'Brien. But every means she tried to soften the obdurately inflexible priest, served only to harden his heart. His severe dis-

position saw, in the exertion of a mother's tenderness to shield her child from his rage, guilt equal to Erina's, in daring to entertain heretical opinions, to avow them, and not only attempt to justify them, but endeavour to influence her parent to excuse the crime. Mrs. O'Brien's unfortunate interference to protect her daughter from the confessor's indignation, irritated his violent spirit; and, exasperated to the utmost pitch, he breathed all the rancour of his soul in the most terrific threats, and thundered such tremendous anathemas, that the timidly gentle mind of Mrs. O'Brien, unable to stem the torrent of Father Murphy's passionate acrimony, submitted itself to him as the only mode of appeasing the anger of her harsh director. Apprehensive that Erina's ascendency over her mother might injure his, and destroy his interest, he conceived a scheme of separating them, to retain the situation he began now to be afraid of losing through Erina's influence. Her letter had displayed a force of mind, a depth of intelligence, and an energy of character, which convinced him he could no longer assume the power of a master over a girl, too enlightened in her understanding not to detect the ignorance in himself, of which he was conscious; and fearing an exposure that would subject him to contempt if he entered the lists of disputation with his late pupil, whom he

could no longer direct as a docile child, his plan was to alarm her mother into compliance with his severe decree, which would effectually cut off all future communication between her and Erina.

Having, by outrageous vehemence, awakened the pious fears and tender conscience of the timid Mrs. O'Brien, to assist him in his double project of safety and vengeance, he prevailed on her to write a letter to her daughter, under his dictation, to inform her that, as an expiation of her dreadful offence against the church of Rome, she must submit to any penance the superior and confessors of the convent thought fit to enjoin, for the dreadful sin of heresy; and that, in order to keep herself clear from any participation in her enormous and shocking crime, she held herself obliged to yield her daughter up *entirely* to the guidance of the lady abbess, and to the will of the friars attendant on the nunnery, in consequence of which she could receive no appeal against their authority, under penalty of excommunication; and that she had written to the superior, to invest her with all the power necessary to enforce that conversion she sincerely prayed might touch the soul of her erring child.

Accompanying these letters to Erina and the

abbess from Mrs. O'Brien, was an address to the superior from Father Murphy, in which he enjoined her, as she valued her own salvation, to secure that of her pensioner, by enforcing her speedy assumption of the veil, as the only mode of retaining her or her mother in the true catholic faith. The priest mentioned with horror the avowed heresies of the daughter, and the influence she had obtained over her parent to make her excuse her heretical opinions; and he concluded, by exhorting the abbess to the best exertion of her zeal, advising her to take advantage of the licence she had obtained under Mrs. O'Brien's signature, and force Erina into her order as soon as possible, to prevent her perdition; adding, as a necessary caution, which would ensure the success of their praiseworthy undertaking, not to permit Erina's communication with her parents, or any other person, by letter or interview, until all danger of the frustration of their intention was over, by her having taken the religious vows and habits; which would thenceforth preclude all possibility of her intercourse with the world, or a discovery of the manner in which her sequestration from it had been effected. As a sure mode of securing himself from being at all suspected, or upbraided by any person, as the author of Erina's religious seclusion, which he was certain her mother was

not aware could happen, he desired the lady abbess might represent it as the free choice of her pensioner, lest the idea of its having been enforced should operate to the disadvantage of the superior, the convent, and their religion; which completely solved to the conscience of the priest this fraud as perfectly justifiable, since it was practised in the cause of the true faith. He omitted not to touch on this subject; but his persuasions were not necessary to make the lady abbess see the duty of saving the soul of a fellow-creature, which she thought in danger. Immediately on the receipt of her orders, she acted with all the authority Father Murphy himself could have wished.

The hapless object of his anger, fear, and hatred, thunderstruck by the denunciation of the superior, saw no way of avoiding the tremendous power to which her mother had subjected her. She beheld herself immured for life in a gloomy prison, and in the dungeon of despair found herself shackled with eternal chains.

Dead to her relations and every earthly view, her soul, buoyed on the wings of hope, gazed with the eye of faith on joys beyond the grave; and her mind regained that calm which pious con-

fidence inspires in a christian heart amidst the most direful calamities of life. Regarding this world as a mere passage to that celestial and eternal residence, where beatitude is promised as the reward of holiness, she endeavoured to adhere to that line of conduct which would ensure her future felicity. Erina had studied her duties so attentively in the careful perusal of the sacred scriptures, that they were indelibly imprinted in her retentive memory, and impressed most deeply in her heart: her mind, ever innocent and virtuous amidst worldly temptations to error, now surrounded by the severest trials, became angelic. Charming in the days of her childhood, she had advanced hourly in perfection as her years increased, and was now almost superior to human nature, and an example that it possesses the *power*, where the *will* is not deficient, to emulate the spirits of beings above this world.

Delivered over to the guidance of the lady abbess, and to the direction of a rigid confessor, she submitted without a murmur to the innumerable and severe penances enjoined for the expiation of what was deemed her errors. She wept over the lines that had consigned her to the cruellest persecutions, without feeling the slightest inclina-

tion to resentment against the authors of her sufferings. Her mother's idea, ever sacred, was still cherished in the enthusiastic affection of filial duty; and she ventured not even to think herself cruelly treated by the parent who had given her up to a life of exile and wretchedness. With affections still warm as her heart was pure, she would have died for that mother; and fervently praying she might never be visited by unhappiness, she resolved to endure every possible misery in silence, rather than attempt to free herself from her present dreadful situation, at the risk of occasioning her parent one pang either of remorse or fear.—"Fear not, my mother," cried the weeping Erina, mentally, "that your child will expose you to any pain or alarm by an appeal, which might draw on you the calamity of excommunication! No, you shall not suffer either that distress or disgrace through my fault; neither shall you ever learn the sorrows which rend my soul, at the sad idea that I shall never more behold my country nor my relations. Dear land of my nativity, adieu for ever! Beloved friends of my heart, farewell, until we meet in Heaven!"

As Erina thus internally ejaculated in the dismal cell now allotted her, she sunk upon her knees on the cold rugged stone, placed by her hard com-

fortless mattress, for her private devotions. Her beautiful bright eyes, raised towards Heaven, beamed fervent piety, while tears, streaming down her roseate cheeks, fell impearled upon her snowy heaving bosom; her delicate hands, clasped and uplifted, called attendant angels to waft her vows to the celestial throne; and a sweet smile of pious resignation to the Divine will, gave to her countenance an expression so truly seraphic, that a painter in endeavouring to seize the beauty of her face, the sublimity of her air and figure, and the grace of her attitude, to give mortals an idea of a beatified saint, might, in the enthusiasm her loveliness inspired, have been seduced to idolatry.

As Erina, in the agony of her soul, deplored her miserable situation, she prayed fervently for the authors of her woes: she entreated Heaven to avert from her beloved mother, with every other affliction, that of remorse for having sacrificed an only daughter to a life of sad imprisonment within the dreary walls of a tomb, whence there could be no possibility of a release until the final and tremendous day of judgment. Erina's thoughts paused at the idea of that day, to some so full of horror and consternation: her soul, however, looked forward to it with faith, as the bright dawn of an effulgent and eternal day of happiness. Her

heart bounded with rapture at the prospect of endless bliss, in the unceasing joys of which the griefs of life would be forgotten; or, if remembered and reverted to, would give, if possible, more ecstasy to the possession of that beatitude attained through patient sufferings, in a humble hope of salvation, founded on faith in the all-sufficient atonement for the accumulated sins of a guilty world. In this blessed dependance, the amiable girl's heart felt elated, as with a present felicity in its anticipation. Her tears ceased to flow, as the brilliant blaze of beatific futurity shone on her virtuous mind, and irradiated the present scene. Erina's heart, expanded by benevolence, again prayed fervently for her enemies; and when she supplicated for wisdom and grace to know and fulfil all Christian duties as she ought, she interceded that no sin might be imputed to the mistaken zeal of her persecutors. She was too deeply impressed with the love of heavenly charity to fail in its essential points, and too well apprized it was enjoined as an obligation of christianity, to believe the species of persecution she endured could be consistent with the mild doctrines of a religion, which guided even its strict justice by the lenient rules of infinite mercy. The severe opinions entertained of her by the superior and confessors of the convent, when, upon a rigidly

scrutinizing self-examination, her conscience did not accuse her of any criminal interpretation of the sacred volume, where the precepts of faith and morality are equally simple as they are sublime; and the cruelly harsh treatment she experienced from the lady abbess, and priests attendant on the nunnery, instead of enforcing their opinions, would have estranged Erina from the Romish church, had she not thought it wrong to change her religion from interested motives. She was obliged to assume the religious habit, and submit to the utmost rigours of the order, into which the superior told her she should soon be compelled to enter. The sisterhood, in the meanwhile, treated her with a severity calculated to make her feel all the horrors of her situation. Yet, amidst all the trials to which she was every moment exposed, the remembrance of her Redeemer's sufferings and injunctions, made her woes sit lightly; her tears of sorrow were mingled with smiles of complacency, and forgiveness of her tormentors, with prayers for their everlasting happiness; followed every outrage they committed against her.

When Erina left the convent with Lady Kinross, their musical instruments, with every implement for painting, and all their books, were removed to the Hotel St. Amand; and as Erina returned to

the nunnery in the hope and expectation of soon quitting it for Ireland, she left all her things, except some plain apparel, under her friend's care, to be packed up for their intended journey whenever it became practicable for them to leave France. In consequence of this arrangement, the absence of Erina's library, harp, and drawing-boxes, had often been a serious regret to her; and amongst all her heavy misfortunes, she lamented that the bigotry of her persecutors now interdicted her absolutely the innocent amusements of music, painting, and elegant authors; which might have beguiled many sorrowful hours. She had never pursued her various accomplishments for celebrity; the pleasures she derived from them originated in a great taste for the fine arts: but she was now forced to relinquish them, with every other enjoyment of life; and bestowed a daily sigh to the deprivation of her favourite instrument, dear to her heart as the sweetest voice of harmony, the insigne of Hibernia, and her beloved brother's gift. She often wept at the idea of its being lost to her for ever. "If," thought the disconsolate girl, "the severity of the regulations to which I am submitted, prevent my sweeping in plaintive, and even sacred accords, the strings of that dulcet instrument on which the royal musician and pious psalmist praised his great Creator with the ac-

cepted fervour of enthusiastic devotion ; yet, surely, it could not have been accounted a crime in me by the eternal Author of Heaven, that I received a melancholy gratification in retaining in my possession, keeping in view the testimony of my brother's affection, which I faithfully promised mine would ever carefully preserve for his sake : surely my harp, untouched, and standing silent in my cell for spiders to weave their webs around its strings, would have been, as a memento of past joys, a striking lesson to my heart, to fix its love on things beyond the tomb; since the most refined and innocent terrestrial enjoyments die in the hour that gives them birth.

" The sounds of melody are lost in silence —the colours of the most perfect painting fade away—the sculptor's labours crumble from exquisite symmetry to mishapen pieces—the stupendous monuments of the architect's art and human power, resisting the tempest's rage for ages, at length moulder into ruins—man himself dissolves into his parent dust, with the beauteous produce of the earth ;—but : s the d caying flowers rebloom, as the trees and herbage are renewed in verdure, the spirit is to rise to life immortal amidst the wreck of perishing worlds, to adore for ever the Omnipotent Author of all things."

All Erina's reflections soared from terrestrial, evanescent objects to celestial subjects: she had always accustomed her thoughts to mount on moralizing wings; and her mind, from constant exercise in pious contemplations, had acquired a habit of reading in the minutest thing, or the most trivial incident, a volume of heavenly truths. By this means every object was to Erina a book of learning, all places a temple of science and worship, each thought a devotional act; and her soul, in all situations, was spiritualized to angelic perfection. She required no seclusion from the world, who, amidst its greatest pleasure, valued it not above its real worth. She was not a morose cynic, decrying every thing to no estimation—no heart was more alive to enjoyment than Erina's; but she appreciated all as a being born to felicity beyond a mortal state, and became truly grateful for every temporal blessing as a foretaste of eternal joys. As the lovely girl had been thankful when surrounded by all the goods of life, she was piously resigned when bereaved of every thing that could render her earthly existence desirable, and continued to value the world as much now amidst sorrow, as she had prized it in happiness; namely, as a probationary state for a future one, whose external joys were cheaply purchased by an age of woe.

The saloon and adjoining apartments she had occupied with Rosaline, and at her desire, retained as an abode after she returned to the convent, from the Hotel St. Amand, were now locked against Erina's entrance, to whom a miserable cell was allotted as her future chamber.

Here in solitude, now rendered cheerless in the extreme by the gloom of winter, the remembrance of her relations and friends beguiled the length of the dreary hours. Her thoughts, when unengaged by spiritual contemplations, flew to the paternal mansion of Glenrock. Recollection retraced on her imagination the scenes of her loved country, while fancy carried her back to the happy hours of her childhood: she sighed often at the retrospection of days gone for ever; wept to the memory of her father, mother, grandsire, and brother; the old domestics, endeared to her heart by faithful services, were daily remembered; the villagers of Glenrock hamlet were not forgotten; her beloved Seraphina and Rosaline, with all those acquaintance who had contributed to her departed pleasures, received the tribute of frequent thoughts from the amiable Erina; who, in the hopes of her friends' happiness, ceased frequently to dwell on the mournful idea of the enjoyments she had lost irrecoverably.

When she heard the dreadful sentence which doomed her to monastic seclusion for life, as the only penance by which her heresy could be expiated, and as a punishment due to her errors, she hoped that, although imprisoned from the world for ever, yet the presence of her loved Rosaline would occasionally cheer her sequestration; and that in the daily society of her dearest friend, and the constant association of the amiable Agnes, her fellow-sufferer and companion in affliction similar to her own, she might still preserve one of the chief pleasures of existence in the pure and tranquil enjoyment of sincere, animated, and faithful friendship. To mingle her tears with those of the sorrowful Agnes, to relieve her griefs by sympathy, and with her sister in distress, to reflect on the sweet smiles with which Rosaline would frequently, she doubted not, endeavour to enliven their gloomy abode, became a pleasure to Erina, even in consolatory anticipation. In proportion as her energetic soul, deprived of every other earthly joy, clung to this soothing hope as the only probability, or rather possibility of terrestrial comfort, in a deplorably, desolate situation, in the same degree did the gentle Erina keenly feel the anguish of disappointment, as she experienced the total frustration of that expectation which had

soothed her with the idea that, although exiled for ever from her native land, from her paternal home, and deserted by relations, yet the constant attentions of two estimable and attached friends would prevent her finding her condition entirely forlorn. Momentarily, hourly, and daily, she looked for the accustomed visits of Rosaline; and every day, hour, and moment, Erina measured time by the most tormenting disappointment. Incapable of mistrusting the fidelity of her friend, as she was herself incapable of failing in any office of friendship, instead of blaming Rosaline for apparent neglect, she was persuaded that illness, or some misfortune, had prevented her friend's calling as usual; and this painful apprehension augmented considerably the weight of woe that had already oppressed her. In an agony of suspense and alarm, which originated in the warmth of her affection for Rosaline, rather than any selfish consideration, Erina passed a most dreadfully anxious week.

During all that time Agnes, once so attentive to relieve her slightest uneasiness, now beheld her weep unmoved, and saw her incessantly mourn without the least attempt to comfort her. The nun's demeanour, lately so engaging, was now be-

come severe; her countenance no longer expressed the soft feeling of a compassionate heart. She shunned Erina instead of seeking her as formerly; and when approached by the dejected girl, who often endeavoured to conciliate a return of that tender regard once professed for her by the nun unsolicited, her chilling aspect interdicted any intercourse. One day when Erina found herself particularly agitated, she approached Agnes, with a purpose to address her by enquiries relative to Lady Kinross, to learn if any intelligence of her had reached the convent. As the weeping girl drew near the nun, she fixed a freezingly repulsive look on the mourning suppliant, which forbid her repeating the unanswered interrogation concerning Rosaline. Erina, heart-struck by the sternly cold manner and chilling looks of the altered Agnes, retreated from her, and, withdrawing from the surrounding sisterhood, she retired to the less cheerless solitude of her gloomy cell: there alone, and trembling with agitation as well as with the rigours of the season, she seated herself on the stone before her casement, over whose arch dark ivy hung, and round which long grass and weeds creeping, waved to the blast. As she fixed her tearful eyes on the desolation of winter that had despoiled the garden of the convent of every

flower and leaf, she likened herself to the withered branches quivering to the rude wind, and stripped, by frosts, of all their foliage. This emblem of the recent change in her situation, struck an icy chill upon her heart; and shivering, as she dwelt on the reflection how happily she once had lived, how miserably she must henceforth pass her melancholy days, she exclaimed, in low and plaintive tones---" Alas! I am deserted by Agnes---she, whose sorrows I wept in the hours of my felicity, refuses me one tear of commiseration in my distress, and aggravates it by her unkindness! May Heaven pardon thee, Agnes, as I forgive thee! instead of resenting thy conduct, charity tells me to extenuate it, and almost justify it, since the motive by which all actions should be judged, is pious zeal." Thus, an angelic disposition pleaded the cause of the offending nun to Erina's dispassionate judgment; while her sensibility was wounded by the cruelty of her persecutors, benevolence diffused the balm of comfort over her mind; at peace with her soul, she refrained from judging with severity the errors of her fellow-creatures, although nearly faultless herself; but the perfection of her nature made her feel that *righteousness alone can condemn with strict justice; and, since the supreme Author of all good pardons innumerable*

crimes committed against his high Majesty, by the ingratitude of his sinful creatures, they are bound to forgive each other's mutual offences, to entitle themselves to that mercy which is promised the christian charity.

CHAP. IV.

"He who permits the trial of his creatures will afford them assistance to eschew those errors they solicit grace to avoid; and, whenever he sees fit, he will have power to deliver them from the evils they have endured with resignation: for innocence and virtue are the particular delight and peculiar care of the righteous and omnipotent Author and Director of all things."

IT was now the depth of winter---and all its discomforts were heightened by the rigours of her situation, when, one dreadfully tempestuous night, as Erina lay on her wretched mattress listening to the tremendous storm, that howled in hoarse blasts through the dismal cloisters, and with sudden bellowing gusts, seemed to shake the antiquated fabric of the convent to its very foundation, she trembled with terror at the war of the elements as she heard the driving deluge of rain beat violently against her ratling casement; and, shivering with cold, she watched the quivering lamp whose feeble ray, shining on the crucifix behind her pillow, left the other parts

of her small cell in gloomy shade; when, through the uncertain light she beheld a form approach.—Erina raised herself to gaze at the unexpected and unknown nocturnal visitant. As it advanced on slowly-measured and unsounding tread, she observed it wrapped in sable drapery, and marked it wave one arm in signal to her, while with its other hand it threw aside a veil, placing a finger on its lips, and stood beside her like the figure of Silence, and equally mute.

An inexplicable dread, in chilling tremours, crept through the clay-cold frame of Erina as she fixed an enquiring look upon the form before her. The glimmering lamp cast but a faint and sombre gleam upon the dark envelopements of the figure, in whose pale visage no feature shewed the likeness of any recollected acquaintance; but as Erina fixed her eyes on those now rivetted on her, the unknown shape bent over her, and drawing from its bosom something, which the surprised and terrified girl could not distinguish, was presenting it to her, when the exhausted lamp became extinct, and left Erina in pitchy darkness.

Undetermined how to act, she waited an instant in breathless suspense; then, in a soft, yet firm accent, demanded the name and errand of her

mysterious visitor. A deep sigh was the sole response to this interrogation, and she was about to repeat her question, when a hand, cold as marble, fixed itself over her lips; at the same instant a small packet was dropped into her bosom: but the form Erina now ventured to grasp eluded her hold, and groping in vain to seize it, she sunk upon her pillow, perturbed by the extraordinary event of the night.

She spent its tedious hours in a quick succession of various and conflicting emotions. Hope and dread, mingled with anxiety, kept her spirits agitated as the stormy night; and restlessly uneasy, she counted the moments, wishing for yet fearing the approach of the tardy dawn. Erina was superior to every superstitious terror: that her wonderful visitor was a supernatural one, never entered her thoughts; they were, however, busily occupied in conjecturing who it might be, and of what it could be the messenger, or how it came. The mysteriously delivered packet of unknown import lay at her palpitating heart, whose every beat pulsated through her aching temples, throbbed through her agitated frame, and seemed to sound upon her hard and comfortless pillow; while alternate sensations of burning heat and icy chills ran through her veins. With wearied eyes she watched for the

slowly approaching morn, which broke at length in misty light.

Erina, taking advantage of its first faint gleam, was unfolding the packet to satisfy her anxiously eager curiosity, when the matin-bell, summoning the sisterhood to their devotions, forced her to relinquish the enquiries she was impatient, yet fearful, of making. She found herself, as usual, in solitude even when surrounded by the nuns, none of whom noticed her since she had been denounced as a heretic; even Agnes, who had formerly evinced extreme benevolence and attachment to Erina, now paid her no further attention than to return an occasional salutation, and on this morning passed her without making the accustomed compliment.

The first moment the disconsolate girl found herself at liberty to retire to her cell, she hastened thither, and developing the packet, discovered a small inkhorn with a pen, some paper for writing, curiously folded in a small compass, beside a scroll, on which she perceived the traces of her beloved Rosaline's hand, and read as follows:

"Thank Heaven, I have at length found a channel, through which, I can address the dearest beloved friend of my heart.

" Alas! my Erina, the cruel orders which have for some weeks prevented all intercourse between us, have made me your sister in affliction. Agnes, the amiable bearer of this, has confided to my secrecy your dreadful situation, and the melancholy fate preparing for you by the mistaken zeal of your bigotted persecutors. I can scarcely be persuaded that your mother has acted so wicked a part as to consign you to a life of wretchedness: if it be, however, true, that she has delivered you over to the torments I hear, with agony, you suffer, I relinquish the affection I formerly felt for the parent of my Erina. The indignation I cannot avoid harbouring against your barbarous persecutors, my sweet friend, falls also partly on myself, because I am, in some measure, the cause, although unintentionally, of your situation. This painful conviction has made me vow most solemnly, to attempt every thing, and hazard all in unwearied efforts, to rescue you from the misfortunes into which your friendship for me has plunged you. Yes! Erina, your sweet compliance with my solicitations, that you would remain my companion to console me in my exile from my country, has made you a melancholy exile from your native land; whither you would have returned to enjoy felicity in the bosom of your family, had it not been your unfortunate destiny to sacrifice your hap-

piness for me. Oh! my friend, I can scarcely bear the afflicting thought that I have been the means of placing you amidst the dreadful trials by which you are now surrounded, but which could never have occurred had not your absence from your relations, and your residence amongst bigots, subjected you to the unnatural desertion of the first, and the cruel persecution of the latter.

" I have, however, sworn by all the sacredness of true friendship to act most faithfully by its laws, and to devote myself to procure that peace and freedom for you, which your affection for me has led you into the hazard of forfeiting. Yes! Erina, please Providence, we shall yet live and die, perhaps, inseparable companions!

" Although interdicted seeing you, the superior dares not refuse my visiting at the convent, since I have been her pensioner there. In my daily calls of enquiry concerning you, I have contrived private interviews with the faithful Agnes. True to your interests, she has been obliged to feign herself estranged from you entirely, in order to retain a power of serving you without the suspicion of the lady abbess, or any of the sisterhood; none of whom she can venture to trust with the knowledge of her regard for you, lest she should be

betrayed, and thus draw upon you greater rigours than those to which you are already subjected. She has commissioned me to acquaint you, that although she dare not evince any tenderness towards you, she will be the channel of intercourse between us by secret nocturnal visits to you. She desires me to enjoin your receiving her in perfect silence, for fear even the lowest whispers should be overheard by any of the sisterhood in the cells adjoining your's. I shall, whenever an opportunity offers, transmit intelligence through this means. Write to me, clandestinely, with the implements conveyed with this, and dispatch your answers to my letters when Agnes visits you at night in secret. Be careful, for your own sake, mine, and that of our friendly nun, to conceal our intercourse.

"Adieu, for the present, beloved friend of my heart! and may the guardian angels of virtue watch over you, my amiable Erina, until we meet! Agnes assures me she will concert a plan for your escape from the convent, when I have contrived a scheme to secure you from the power of your tormentors. In the meanwhile, farewell!

"Believe me, Erina,

"thy faithful friend for ever,

"ROSALINE KINROSS."

The perusal of this letter acted on the mind of Erina as a gleam of sunshine cheering the face of nature with brightness, after a fearful storm; and her lively gratitude to the amiable Rosaline and Agnes made her rejoice that she had never harboured any injurious suspicions against the friendship each now so strongly demonstrated for her; and she treasured this incident as a lesson never to judge hastily, nor trust to appearances, in the condemnation of a friend. The little gift she had received from Rosaline was deposited in security, and the grateful Erina seized with avidity the first hour of uninterrupted seclusion, to pen an answer to the address she had received, and wrote as follows.

"DEAREST, most amiable, and truly faithful friend, I hasten with eagerness to thank you for the charming proof your affection affords me of its tenderness!

"I will not waste the precious opportunity Agnes's friendship offers me, in the representation of my sufferings, neither will I spend time in useless lamentations over afflictions they will heighten rather than relieve. But I must not lose this occasion of requesting you, my beloved Rosaline, as you value my happiness, to spare your censure of

my mother. She believes herself, I am convinced, perfectly justified in her conduct; which I will never presume to condemn, nor will I submit to hear it blamed, even by the dearest friend of my soul.

" With respect to your kind offices towards my release from my painful confinement, I should not think myself right in rejecting liberty, should it be in your power to free me from the imprisonment in which I am threatened with being bound for ever. The vows which will be forced on me, in case of my remaining here, are contrary to my inclination; and therefore, in taking them, I shall be committing a perjury; from the criminality of which I shall joyfully endeavour to escape, believing myself entirely guiltless in accepting the means which friendship, under the guidance of Providence, offers of restoring me to freedom.

" Although my mother is prohibited, under the penalty of excommunication, from interfering against the authority of the convent, which prevents my writing to entreat it, yet she cannot, in justice, incur any forfeit on my disengaging myself without her consent or concurrence, from a situation of which, perhaps, she is not thorougly apprized. At all events, the attempt to liberate

myself is certainly lawful. I think I know my heart too well to doubt my readiness to sacrifice every thing to my beloved mother's peace of conscience: should I find it can only be procured by my assuming the veil, I shall then be willing to purchase her happiness by taking the religious habit, since my vows will, in that case, be a voluntary offering of filial duty, which must ensure my temporal and eternal felicity.

" Rosaline, my sweet friend, adieu! and if you desire my tranquillity, continue not to reproach yourself as the cause of my misfortune; which originated in my having unfortunately irritated my mother's chaplain and confessor, to whose rancour I attribute the apparent severity of my parent.

" Once more, dearest friend of my heart, adieu! That Heaven may bless you, ever is the hourly prayer of your gratefully attached

" ERINA O'BRIEN."

Having for several nights been disappointed of the friendly nun's nocturnal visit, Erina began to be impatient at its delay, when she saw Agnes approach in cautious silence as before. The faint glimmer of her lamp served not to illumine the countenance of the benevolent sister, nor could i

shew the lively gratitude glowing in the bosom of the gentle girl; who encircling the visitor in a most affectionate embrace, evinced, by a salute of friendship, that tender regard and thankfulness which would have been depicted in a strikingly touching expression in each beautiful feature, had there been sufficient light to shew a face of exquisite loveliness. The good nun had a keenly feeling heart; and pressed to Erina's, enfolded her in her arms, shewing and experiencing that gestures may become an interesting language of sentiment, when the eloquence of speech, and even that of looks, is impossible.

Agnes and Erina having each a packet to deliver, exchanged them, and parted after a mutual embrace, which, although given in profound silence, expressed on each side an animated and faithful friendship.

As soon as the nun had left Erina's cell, the impatient girl drew near her lamp, trimmed it carefully, and with some difficulty contrived to peruse, by its quivering and feeble rays, the following letter:

"In the sweet hope of having already cheered your dreary seclusion, and, consoled by the still

more delightful hope of emancipating the amiable friend of my faithful bosom from the melancholy prison where a cruel fate has placed her, I once more eagerly seize the pen to address her; whilst waiting with trembling impatient anxiety, the reply to a few lines I had the good fortune to slip, unseen, into the hand of our trusty Agnes, at the convent grate, some days ago, when I called to enquire about my loved friend's health.

"Since that period I have been solely occupied in devising plans for your safety and happiness, my dear Erina; and I now hasten to inform you of the result of my reflections on the subject of your release, and to consult with you upon it. On this theme it is necessary I should disclose to your consideration every thing relative to the various schemes that have been devised respecting your affairs. As I had occasion for advice on them, I have employed my cousin St. Amand as my counsellor, judging him the properest person for my confidence, for two good reasons; first, as he is really a worthy young man, endowed with an excellent head as well as an amiable heart; and secondly, because I am certain his regard for me as his near relation, and his animated attachment to you, will bind him steadily faithful to our joint interest.

"In consideration of your delicacy, as well as my principles of honour, I had purposed never to mention to you how sensibly the poor chevalier was grieved at your quitting the Hotel St .Amand: Advising him as a sincere friend to extinguish a passion fatal to his peace, his virtue, and the happiness of the amiable Antoinette, I had flattered myself my cousin's honour had operated effectually to subdue in him what I suspected might prove a mere sentiment of admiration, such as your qualities, my dear Erina, must awaken in every susceptible heart: however, his, contrary to my expectation, has yet retained the love I had hoped your absence would have cured; I find the youth still a captive to your charms, and have been induced to promise that I would disclose to you an attachment which I believe has usurped the empire I should have wished, in compassion to Antoinette, she had gained over the soul of my cousin. As he has assured me most solemnly, he can never unite himself to her while his heart is enslaved elsewhere, and as he has already confided to Mademoiselle La Fontaine, that his affection is a truant to her perfections, I consider myself at liberty to disclose a lover's suit to you; although I have told my cousin I will not use the privilege of friendship to plead his case, even were I in expectation of entire success in carrying a cause

which interest might bribe me to gain, not only for your advantage, but my own sake.

" But I must proceed. The chevalier commissions me to inform my lovely friend Erina, that Mademoiselle La Fontaine has freed him willingly from the engagement contracted by their parents. In consequence of which, St. Amand considers himself at perfect liberty to offer his hand with the humble solicitations of empassioned attachment at the shrine where his soul bends in adoration. He requests me to mention that he has a handsome fortune independent of his father; in case of whose displeasure in the choice his heart has made, he will, for the sake of his adored Erina, relinquish for ever his country to reside wherever she may desire. The chevalier bids me add, that your will now, and ever in future shall direct his actions, and guide even his wishes. It is his opinion, that in case you honour him with acceptance of his addresses, that his family will receive you into it with every attention your superior qualities ought to command; and that the exertion of his father's interest will be sufficient to check any authority the superior of the convent might be induced to claim over you, were you not under the protection of a house as powerful as that of the Count St. Amand's. Should you, however, choose

not to submit to measures such as have been proposed, and prefer a secret evasion from the nunnery, which Agnes has promised to secure, and a clandestine union with the chevalier, which may be with facility and decorum contrived in circumstances which, he desires me to say, are sufficiently urgent to excuse both your flight and private marriage, especially when the company and concurrence of a female most attached friend will sanction the step, he is ready to obey all your wishes; and requests I will assure you he exists but for your service, and will ever make it the study of his life to ensure you, if possible, the supreme felicity your favour will confer on a most enthusiastically attached and grateful lover.

"Having executed this commission, I must now conclude, requesting a prompt reply;—and consigning you, my beloved Erina, to the care of Heaven, I shall impatiently await your final decision, convinced, from my knowledge of your character, that your resolution will be right.—Whatever may be your determination, my dearest friend, I shall remain faithful to every office of that sacred title.

"Rosaline Kinross."

The perusal of this letter afforded Erina more pain than pleasure; and by the faint light of her lamp, she contrived, with much difficulty, to write the following answer:

"With the most grateful affection I greet my beloved Rosaline, and hasten to reply to a proposal which takes no time to deliberate upon, since my immediate and final determination must be a rejection of the chevalier's addresses. I am certain, my dearest friend will neither be surprised nor displeased at my refusing the offers of her cousin, which it would be impossible I could accept consistently with delicacy of sentiment or strict honour. I can never consent to purchase my liberation at the expence of my principles; for conscious innocence must render the most wretched situation tolerable, while self-condemnation will not fail to destroy all enjoyment in the most flattering circumstances procured by the smallest sacrifice of rectitude.

"Present my best acknowledgments to the chevalier, for the lively interest he has done me the favour to take in my concerns; and assure him, I am too grateful for his kindness, and too sincerely his friend, to permit his infringing the duties of morality and religion by a dereliction from honour

and filial obedience. Tell him, at the same time, that were I base enough to take advantage of his compassion, I should be unworthy of it---tell him also, Rosaline, with the ingenuousness of true friendship, that I should cease to esteem him were he insensible to the claims which the heart of the amiable Antoinette, his country, and his parents have on his affections. Inform your cousin likewise, that were I indifferent to higher considerations, my pride would never submit to my entering a family against their wishes either openly or clandestinely---the first would be mean, the second most contemptible conduct.

" I am prepared for the worst that can happen to me, and have, I think, fortitude sufficient to bear every thing but a despicable opinion of myself: self-approbation, your esteem, and the affection of Agnes, will enable me to live contented, and to die in peace with the humble hope of Heaven's mercy.

" May its angels ever guard, and may Providence always bless my dearest friend Rosaline, prays her tenderly affectionate, and ever grateful,

" ERINA O'BRIEN."

Having found an opportunity of delivering this to Agnes, unseen by any of the sisterhood, on the following day, the amiable Erina composed her mind to the patient endurance of her sufferings. Notwithstanding her reliance on the friendship and best exertions of Rosaline to rescue her from the pensive noviciate, she was far from flattering herself with sanguine, or even faint hopes of evading a monastic confinement. Young as she was when she left Glenrock, she observed the influence Father Murphy had over her mother's mind, whose recent conduct too plainly evinced the increase of the confessor's power, to admit Erina's entertaining an expectation that she could obtain, even in an interview with her parent, the reversion of a decree which bound her to a life of penance and religious seclusion. She anticipated, on the contrary, that the rigour of her sentence would be increased by an attempt to evade it; yet, much as she dreaded the horrors that might await her on a re-delivery of her into the power of the superior, who would doubtless punish, in a severe manner, a flight from the convent, Erina felt she owed it to herself to request her emancipation from a situation totally against her inclinations, and in many respects contrary to her ideas: for she thought that a life of active duty and utility in the world, was more a christian obligation, than a seclusion from

the innocent scenes of social life. Notwithstanding this persuasion, the amiable girl was too mild in her opinions to condemn those who took monastic vows, under a conviction of their advantage; she looked with the utmost respect and highest veneration on every species of piety, admiring with enthusiasm every self-denial and action which had virtue for its motive and object.

She waited with anxiety for some days, in expectation of intelligence from Rosaline, respecting whom she dared not enquire of Agnes, even when chance afforded them a meeting alone in the cloisters, lest any of the nuns, by overhearing their conversation, should discover their secret intercourse, which, although their consciences considered as innocent, and even perfectly justified from the urgency of circumstances, Erina was assured would be considered most heinous by every one belonging to the order.

She was, at length, become impatient for a letter from her beloved Rosaline, when the following one was put into her hands:

"YOUR answer to the chevalier's proposals, dear amiable friend, is precisely such as I expected from your superior character. Although

I was convinced you would not decide otherwise than you have done, yet the friendship subsisting between my cousin and me, compelled me to act according to his urgent solicitations in making his offer, to which a positive rejection from you became necessary, to assure him the hope he entertained that you might be moved to accept his addresses was vain. The manner in which you have refused his suit, while it does honour to your understanding, your feelings, and your principles, is so calculated to awaken the chevalier's heart to a just sense of his several duties, that I have sanguine hopes he will fulfil them all. His dispositions are good, and he requires nothing but proper advice to become a very excellent character. As he is extremely young, very volatile, and has a very susceptible heart, I cannot wonder at, and, in truth, can scarcely condemn him for receiving a strong impression from the uncommon perfections of my lovely friend Erina: yet, I hope his unfortunate passion will yield to the necessity of subduing it. I have conceived high expectation of it from the manner he received your rejection, in which a lesson was too well given, I think, to prove ineffectual. Added to which, circumstances have occurred to call forth all the sensibility of my cousin's nature, and to excite the liveliest admiration of Antoinette, and the utmost

gratitude towards her; because in her liberation of him from a positive engagement, she has at once shewn great delicacy and generosity, by incurring an imputation of extraordinary caprice, in order to save my cousin from blame, and the displeasure of his parents; by which means she has screened his honour, and prevented, perhaps, a fatal breach between the duke, her father, and the count and chevalier, at the expence of being called publicly a fickle, foolish girl. The sacrifices she has made have cost her much exertion of virtue, as her lost spirits and decaying health mark her already to be the victim of sensibility.

"The poor chevalier, now fully apprized of the value of his long affianced bride, is at present in despair at the idea of the devastation he has committed in the happiness of an engaging girl; and he is so touched by the convincing testimony she has given of disinterested regard for him, that I augur a fortunate termination to this affair.

"Your's, my dearest friend, occupies my thoughts incessantly. I must inform you I have taken another counsellor into confidential consultation on the subject of your release from the convent:—my present adviser in that business is the Viscount de Briançon, whom I have bound to our interest.

" Ere I disclose my present plan for your liberation I must premise, I cannot consent to take you to Ireland, seeing as I do all the peril to which you will be exposed by returning at this time to your family, where you tell me you have an enemy who has extreme influence over your mother. I promise most solemnly never to wound your feelings by uttering a syllable respecting her at which your filial affection could take offence. After this concession you will not, I trust, refuse to confer on me the favour of becoming my adopted sister, since doing this, and putting yonrself entirely under my protection, are the only means by which you can make me happy.

" As I see many reasons against your remaining in this country, where the authority of the lady abbess would prevail in getting you again into her power, I trust, my dear Erina, you will not make any objection to accompany me abroad, where nothing can separate us but death : an opportunity now offers of our going to a distant country under unexceptionable protection, in case you consent to become my companion. It is necessary I should inform you, the place to which I allude, is India. Notwithstanding our prejudices against its climate, I am assured by some who have lately returned thence, that a residence there is not attended with

danger to the health, if common prudence be observed in the mode of living, which is extremely delightful in the part of Asia we may visit.

"Thus much I have thought it right to acquaint you with, my sweet friend, in order to prevail on you to become a traveller with me. I confess that plan appears to me the best, perhaps the only one that can at present be adopted for your safety, circumstanced as we are. With respect to myself, I must assure you, my dear Erina, that whatever conduces to your advantage and happiness, must be productive of felicity to me, since I can experience no greater earthly enjoyment than living your inseparable companion, and devoting myself to the tenderest offices of friendship in your service; which your society and affection will infinitely overpay.

"I request an immediate decision respecting the scheme now proposed, as its execution must depend upon promptness of determination. Trusting you will accede to it, and grant my earnest solicitation and wishes, I bid you adieu, dearest friend, and sister of my faithful heart!

"ROSALINE KINROSS."

"My most beloved and inestimable friend! I am really at a loss in what manner to thank you for the daily proofs you shew me of an exalted friendship and tender affection; and should feel myself unworthy the animated regard you have constantly evinced for me, were I not to cherish the most enthusiastic sentiments towards you in return. Feeling thus, how is it possible I could reject the title of your adopted sister? I receive it, Rosaline, with equal pride and gratitude, and accede to every wish you can form, persuaded that, in submitting myself entirely to your guidance, I cannot be in danger, whilst following your advice, of deviating from what is right. I place myself, therefore, under your protection, and throw myself a total dependant on your generosity, convinced, from my knowledge of your noble character, that in acting thus I make you happy. A great mind loves to confer benefits; and I possess not that mistaken spirit which feels itself oppressed by favours from those whom I esteem; nor will I refuse, through false pride, to receive obligations from a true friend; since I consider that by thus incurring a debt of gratitude, I prove my perfect reliance on your virtue as well as on your attachment.

"Mine to you, my amiable and beloved Rosa-

line, would lead me to accompany you wherever your judgment directed your course—a desert would appear delightful to me in your society; and as I know the wish of serving me would render a residence any where pleasant to you where the most probability offered of rendering us inseparable companions, I feel less reluctance to be the occasion of your becoming a traveller to distant regions, knowing as I do your dislike to France; and that, perhaps, an eligible opportunity of quitting it at present, under the unexceptionable protection that you tell me now offers, may eventually be the agreeable means of restoring you to your native kingdom, as a constant resident, whence you have so frequently and feelingly lamented your probable exile for life.

"This consideration lessens also the reluctance I might otherwise feel in flying from my family. I perceive, as you do, my friend, all the probable danger that might attend my return to them at present; and although I believed it a duty owing to myself to endeavour escaping an unhappy fate, I feel assured I should have yielded to the severest rigours proposed by my mother's rigid confessor, rather than subject her to his censures, and that of his church; which would doubtless have required either my sacrifice, or my parent's excom-

munication, had she opposed my religious profession. To save my revered mother a trial her affection would have found most arduous, as well as to avoid the criminality of taking vows to which my soul would have felt an abhorrence, I think myself perfectly exculpated in this clandestine intercourse and escape; which I should never have consented to adopt, except for the strong reasons that urge and excuse it as the only means afforded me of defending myself from a fate I think cruelly and unjustly enforced, and which I believe would have overwhelmed my family with grief, when their interference would have been ineffectual towards its prevention. The chief reason for my wish of returning to Ireland, originated in the persuasion that my mother remained ignorant of the lengths to which the lady abbess would proceed in her sentence of penance. But I have to thank you, dearest and best of friends, for affording me a means of liberating myself without incurring any risk of scandal on my name; and at the same time my dear mother be rescued from every danger of unavailing regret on my account, from public or self-reproach, or the censure of her severe director, Father Murphy, who cannot, in his utmost rigour, condemn her for my conduct, to which she gives no concurrence.

" Feeling myself justified in an attempt to shun persecution when I can avoid it in an honourable manner, I would wish you, my friend, to let me know, through the channel of our secret communication, the means by which I am to make my escape from the convent: as I dare not hold friendly intercourse, even by looks, with the amiable Agnes, for fear of exposing her equally with myself to the condemnation of our superior, I have found it impossible to enquire of the worthy nun the plan she purposes to adopt for my release from the strong imprisonment of this place. Should my flight expose her to any suspicion of having aided it, I cannot consent to free myself at the risk of hazarding her punishment: my assent, therefore, to your proposal is, only on condition that you can concert with Agnes a mode of liberating me without exposing her to any danger of being detected as an accomplice in my emancipation. I am convinced Rosaline has too pure and tender a heart to wish me to betray the interests of any being, especially those of the deeply afflicted and amiable nun, whose attachment to us, and her services, bind us to eternal affection and gratitude as her due.

" Dearest of friends, farewell! I cannot, however, conclude without assuring you I am not so

absorbed in my own affairs as to be unmindful of the fate of others: whether I be in happiness or distress, that of your cousin and Antoinette, will extremely interest me, and in every situation I shall rejoice to hear that their's is fortunate. May they and you, my sweet Rosaline, be ever as happy as I wish, and always pray you may become!—Once more, farewell!"

After the dispatch of this letter, Erina waited its reply for a week, at the end of which she received the following lines:

"YOUR emancipation, my beloved Erina, quickly approaches. On Thursday next, after the midnight office, hold yourself in readiness to join me and the Viscount de Briançon, where we shall be in waiting for you at the south wall of the convent, near which a carriage will be stationed to convey us to a place of perfect security, whence we shall embark without any delay; by which means your escape cannot be obviated, as it cannot be traced until it be too late to attempt to stop your flight. As I have taken effectual measures to prevent the slightest suspicion of being accessary to it, my friends in Paris cannot conjecture any thing relative to the fact, which is confided to my cousins alone; so that should the lady abbess make any enquiries

about you of my uncle's family, which it is probable she will, the intelligence she will receive at the Hotel St. Amand, will completely perplex, instead of guiding her search of you. After our embarkation for the East, I will permit you to write to your friends that you are in perfect safety with me, under the protection of the Viscount de Briançon. I admit of your sending this intelligence to your relations, lest they should be uneasy when they become acquainted with your sudden and unaccountable disappearance from the convent; whence your escape cannot be traced, unless you choose, by the means of a letter after we have set sail, to acquaint the superior that your escape from her persecution was an act of justice you owed yourself, since you could effect your liberty by honourable means. This I think advisable in order to secure your reputation from any public censure being thrown upon it by the misrepresentations of the lady abbess, to guard herself from blame, in such an extraordinary affair, in case it become known out of the precincts of the convent.

"Start not, Erina, at the idea of your flying with me as the associate of de Briançon. The ceremony of my union with him, which was celebrated at my uncle's yesterday, places me in a situation to protect you as the companion of the viscount's voyage and residence in India; where

his regiment being ordered, decided my acceding to the marriage I had, prior to that event, refused. Believe me, Erina, when I declare I have entered into that engagement without reluctance, since the bonds I have formed are a small consideration for the advantages accruing to us each from a measure that was, I found, the only one that could guard your liberty, and secure to me the enjoyment of your constant society. For the attainment of this supreme pleasure, I have sacrificed nothing by my marriage with de Briançon. His character has risen extremely in my estimation on an intimate knowledge of qualities, which I was ignorant he possessed. I feel ashamed of having pronounced, at my first acquaintance, that he was interested and unfeeling; because he has since proved his title to the praise of generosity and sensibility, by his conduct towards me, which I cannot enlarge upon at present: yet I must not omit to do him the justice, to acknowledge he has acted both nobly and most delicately with respect to me; which will ever ensure him my esteem and gratitude, and render me assiduous to contribute to his happiness, as he has been desirous of promoting mine, by a solemn vow to protect you as he would a sister. All the affection of that endearing tie you will ever find in my assiduous care of you, my beloved Erina. Let

me entreat you never to mention one syllable of being indebted to me, in the smallest degree, for any thing I have ever done, or may do for you, my sweet girl, hereafter; as in consulting your welfare, and in endeavouring to promote your happiness, I procure my own advantage, and ensure my own felicity, which can only arise in devoting myself to the tenderest attentions of friendship towards you. Remember, Erina, that in accepting what you consider a favour, you confer the greatest obligation on a liberal mind, whilst you evince a noble soul in acknowledging a debt of gratitude for that solicitude which is merely a testimony of affection on my part, so justly due to you, as a trifling return for the benefits your friendship conferred on me when you sacrificed your happiness for mine, in remaining an exile from your country and relations to console me in distress. Not to have felt your claims to my warmest thanks for such favours, would have argued me most unworthy, since I should have failed in the performance of a weighty obligation; but to answer the demands of duty is, at best, but a negative virtue, which, at its highest estimation, neither merits much commendation, nor confers any favour, because it is paid as a just tribute, and therefore can never be termed a gift.

" I am too grateful to Agnes for the service she has rendered me in attending to your interest, to remain unmindful of her's. Rely on my word, she risks nothing in aiding you to effect your escape: the means I employ for her security I cannot now explain; but follow her directions in silence and security.

" Although much hurried in forwarding preparations for you and myself for our voyage, I cannot omit informing you briefly of the sequel of the chevalier's story. He solicited the hand of Antoinette with a contrition that cancelled his offence against fidelity; but his long-affianced bride refused to bestow her hand on a suitor, whose addresses, she believed, were instigated by pity rather than affection: this delicacy of conduct completed the subjugation of my cousin's heart, once insensible to Antoinette, whose merits now had deeply touched him. When she determined not to listen to the chevalier's suit, she rejected the superiorly splendid offers of the young and handsome Marquis de Vermillie, at the same time telling her friends she had resolved on taking the veil. On my communicating this intelligence to my cousin, he was deeply affected at the constancy of Antoinette's attachment, so touchingly demonstrated: he was so moved by the pensive air that

had succeeded her vivacity; so greatly shocked at the visible decay of her health, and so much alarmed at her intention of retiring from the world, into a seclusion absolutely destructive to the hopes he had retained of prevailing on her, by unwearied assiduity, to receive his sincere vows of awakened admiration and tenderest affection, that he fell into despair, and became seriously ill. When he was reduced to a situation truly calculated to expiate his late sin against Antoinette, and to incline her to compassion, I interceded for him so successfully, that I prevailed on her to attend to his addresses. Speedily restored to convalescence, as to hope, the chevalier pleaded his cause with such ardour, that the fair one consented to confer, without delay, the indulgence of becoming his.

"In consequence of which, they were yesterday united at the same altar where my marriage with de Briançon was solemnized; and I had the happiness of witnessing true felicity, to which I had contributed, and which you, my dearest friend, may glory in having promoted by a steady line of conduct, that, whilst it raised you in the estimation of the chevalier, convinced him by precept, example, and experiment, that true happiness could only be obtained by a rigid adherence to the strictest principles of virtue.

" As I have made it a point of honour, and therefore of duty, to guard with care the secret of my cousin's heart, which he is now persuaded was rather occasioned by admiration of your dazzling perfections than by a serious passion, Antoinette has been saved the mortification of learning that any rival had caused the temporary estrangement of her lover. Their parents, rejoicing in the festivities that celebrate the nuptials, which have long been the object of their desire, laugh gaily at what they term the natural caprices and common quarrels of lovers; and believe the mutual affection of their newly wedded children will be more animated from their late misunderstanding. This is, in fact, the real case, which is proved by the present event, without the cause being discovered.

" The chevalier assured me this morning he is perfectly cured of his infidelity, from having learned, by experience, that its effects may be most fatal. He tells me he is grateful to me, and to you, my dear Erina, for having discovered to him the lovely character of Antoinette, which nothing but the test to which it has been put, could have displayed in the beautiful colours that have captivated him, and rendered her triumph over his soul complete.

" We experience now,' said the joyous pair to me this morning, ' the real charms of a proved attachment; and as our marriage has been formed on a perfect knowledge of each other, on rational and high esteem, and, above all, on a mutual choice, we have the fairest prospect of enjoying that felicity which could never have been our lot, had we entered into this sacred and indissoluble engagement without reflection, reciprocal inclination, and genuine sentiment.'

" The eyes of the chevalier and his bride glistened with delight whilst they thus addressed me: and my cousin, pressing the hand of Antoinette, said to her with a tenderly gallant air, ' I am now so fully acquainted with your virtues, my love, and have so sensibly felt the privation of your favour, that I can never henceforth risk the loss of that affection you have so indisputably proved; fear not, therefore, that I should become guilty of even a temporary infidelity.' Antoinette smiled, and, in her turn, assured the chevalier, that she was too sensible of the value of possessing his heart, not to make it the study of her life to ensure the happiness of his, by such an exemplary constancy as would merit and reward his love.

" I could not avoid giving you this history to

cheer your spirits, my beloved Erina. Until we meet to part no more, adieu! In the mean while I am, as I ever shall remain, your's most faithfully, entirely, and affectionately,

"ROSALINE KINROSS."

"P. S. I retain my former appellation, notwithstanding my marriage, according to the mode and for the sake of my beloved country, where inferior titles give place to higher degrees of rank. That of Countess of Kinross, Viscountess and Baroness Bruce, will ever be dear to me, as the gift of my gracious, excellent, and noble king; and as his majesty has favoured me by the distinctions of honour that graced the naval fame of my great grandfather, and to which my grandsire's bravery as a British admiral, added new lustre by deeds of renown, I am strictly bound, not only to retain those brilliant titles, but to act in a manner that will not tarnish them."

As Erina perused this letter by the tremulous faint light of her lamp in her dreary cell, a burst of grief escaped her lips and convulsed her bosom, when she came to the sentence which disclosed that her friend had irrevocably formed that indissoluble connection with the Viscount de Briançon, of which she had so long felt an unconquerable

dread, and which she had so recently expressed a positive resolution never to enter into. It was evident to Erina, notwithstanding the care Rosaline had taken to set the affair in its most favourable point of view, that her marriage must have been a real sacrifice of her interest and happiness for the advantage and felicity of her friend; and the most poignant remorse agonized the acutely feeling soul of Erina, at the reflection of having been the cause of Rosaline's misery. The sorrowing girl finished the perusal of Lady Kinross's letter through showers of tears, which bedewed each line. Then kissing her signature with enthusiastic admiration, gratitude, and tenderest affection, she folded the packet, and placing it next her beating heart, Erina threw herself on her bed; not to sleep, but pass the night in weeping the event she was conscious of having occasioned.

"Would to Heaven," she sighed in mournful accents, "I had died in this dismal abode, uncheered even by intelligence of my angelic friend, rather than have purchased my liberty and Rosaline's charming society at the expence of her happiness!"

Perturbed by the most agonizing sensations, Erina watched impatiently for the dawn; at the

approach of which, fatigued by grief, she sunk into a disturbed slumber, and was suddenly startled out of a dreadful and confused dream by the matin bell.

As she prepared to attend its summons to chapel, she wiped away the streaming tears she could with difficulty repress, and joined with agitated fervour in the morning devotions, reflecting that in three days she should become the companion of her beloved friend, who had sacrificed her own liberty to procure that blessing for her.

Retired in her solitary cell, she was absorbed in the idea of her immense obligations to Rosaline, when an order from the superior commanded Erina immediately into her presence.

With trembling steps the noviciate obeyed the summons, which seemed to her portentous of some new suffering; and as she passed to the apartments of the lady abbess, the agitated Erina offered a mental supplication to Omnipotence for divine protection, and fortitude sufficient to support her in the trial she expected to encounter. On her entrance into the chamber where the superior waited her approach, the gentle girl made an obeisance equally respectful as it was dignified;

and was received with a condescending smile, instead of the severe aspect she had been of late accustomed to meet in every one of the sisterhood. A circle of them now surrounded the chair of their superior, who rose to greet Erina as she advanced in obedience to the summons that had brought her before a dreaded tribunal.

She was not long detained in anxiety to learn the reason for which she had been called into attendance; for the lady abbess, in a formal address, informed the terrified girl, that as the period of her profession quickly approached, it became requisite she should prepare for the sacred solemnity of taking the veil, by writing immediately to inform her mother of her sincerest contrition for the late heretical opinions she had entertained, and that she was about to assume the religious habit as a just penance for crimes she now solemnly abjured, on voluntarily taking the religious vows; which would henceforth detach her, equally from choice as from pious obligations, entirely from the world, which she relinquished with pleasure, and for ever, from every friend and relation, whom she estranged herself from without regret.

Erina started, and turned pale as she listened to the purport of the superior's command; who, de-

siring pen, ink, and paper to be placed before the young noviciate, ordered her instantly to execute the dictated address to her friends as the last that would be allowed. On perceiving her reluctance to fulfil the demand, the abbess repeated it with all the sternness which severity of disposition could throw into a harsh voice, and over a set of features naturally coarse, and rendered still harder by an expression of haughty command.

The gentle Erina felt all the spirit of high birth and an exalted soul swell in her bosom, and glow in her face, as the superior addressed her with supercilious severity. The amiable girl curbed, however, the sensation of resentment she experienced, and in a firm, yet soft accent, assured the abbess, that no extremity should ever induce her to infringe truth, which she had heretofore been taught to revere as one of the highest christian duties. On the superior's demanding with severity, what was intended by the insolent insinuation Erina had uttered, she replied, with calm dignity, that if offence had been taken at what she said, it must originate in a consciousness of meriting reproach, which was not intended. The lady abbess, full of anger, then turned ghastly pale, and trembled with spiteful ire, whilst Erina thus continued—"I have submitted to every penance

enjoined to evince my reverence for pious forms, and my obedience to the orders of the religious institution in which I am compelled to remain: were I, however, mistress of my actions, I should not be an inhabitant of this abode; therefore, as I am detained here against my inclination, I cannot say I relinquish the world with pleasure; neither could I, without great and infamous falsehood, assure my friends and relations that I estranged myself from them for ever without regret, and by free choice assume the habit I now wear. That habit has been *forced* upon me—perhaps there is also a power by which I might be *compelled* to take the veil—possibly there are means by which I might be held in bonds here for life: I pretend not to the strength to withstand such injustice; I have experienced the cruel necessity of submitting to imprisonment—my person is confined, but my mind is free, and would remain so even were I in chains; and whilst Heaven affords me the grace, for which I humbly and constantly supplicate, and while I retain the blessing of reason, no command however peremptory, no entreaty the most urgent, no compulsion although ever so strong, shall ever force me to falsify or even prevaricate. I have submitted to the severe interdiction of not writing to my mother, for fear of subjecting her to rigours similar to those I have undergone, but no earthly

power shall ever make me sign my own condemnation in penning lies."

Whilst Erina spoke, her voice, emphasis, gestures, and looks, appeared animated by celestial inspiration. Her tones were music, her accents were impressive of firmness, her action was directed by the graces to enforce conviction, her countenance was sublime virtue expressed in the lineaments of perfect beauty: but her address roused a vindictive spirit to subdue her's; and by the irresistible mandate of the indignant superior, Erina was decreed to instant confinement in the prison-cell of the convent, as a punishment for contumacious conduct. "I must try," said the abbess, "to crush that stubborn will, which dares to dispute mine. Do your duty," cried she, in a loud voice, and pointing to Erina, whilst, by the fierce glance of her eye, she cammanded the attendant nuns to their office of arrest. The sisterhood immediately evinced their ready obedience to their director, and hastily surrounding the offender, seized her to conduct her to the dungeon to which she had been sentenced. But Erina, stung by an insult she had never until then experienced, with a commanding look, and a dignified air, waved her hand whilst she ordered the nuns to free her from their grasp, saying, "I know how to obey

when in submission there is no *dishonour*. Lead the way, and I shall follow to a dungeon, to chains, to the wrack, to death, instead of disobedience of those sacred commands I hold more precious than a life of earthly pleasure, since their observance, especially when we are tempted to infringe them, will be rewarded with an existence of eternal bliss."

"Lead her forth from my insulted presence," exclaimed the abbess.

Erina bowed, and bent her knee, as she passed onward with a more assured step than when she entered the superior's apartment.

Not a tear, nor even a sigh, escaped the victim's bursting heart, as she followed her guards to the prison. Passing the cloisters, she descended a flight of rugged steps, and then passing under subterraneous arches, through a long extent of narrow mazes, where the light of day glimmered in dark shade, she reached a massy door; which, upon being unlocked, creaked upon its huge and rusty hinges. As Erina entered her dungeon a damp chill struck like an icy bath upon her frame, and made her tremble alike with cold and horror.

"Here you must remain," said one of the

nuns, addressing her prisonerfor the first time, "to repent of having offended our superior. Her indulgence will, however, remit your punishment on your consenting to write what has been required."

"I should be concerned to insult the lady abbess," replied Erina; "as she wears the religious habit, I respect her in the character of the superior of your convent, and could never be induced to offend her, were I not reduced to the necessity of doing so to avoid sinning against that Power which the abbess, and monarchs themselves, are bound to obey. To that omnipotent Power I appeal, and trusting in his mercy, I shall endeavour never to act in such a manner as to forfeit the protection and support for which I shall incessantly pray. Thus resolved, I cannot promise to infringe truth. Bear this as my final answer to the superior."

"Obstinate girl!" ejaculated the nun, as she closed the door, and left Erina in the darkness. The turning of a strong lock, and the clang of heavy bars and bolts sounded terrific in her ears. She sighed deeply, and throwing herself upon the cold stone-floor of the dungeon, she writhed for a moment in the agony of despair, uttering the most piercing cries, and groaning the names of Rosaline and Agnes. "Alas!" moaned Erina,

" I call in vain on those names so dear to my heart! Imprisoned in this dungeon I must end my days, since my release can only be obtained by my apostasy from truth!"

She started from the ground with a sudden spring, and beat her bosom with frantic grief, at the idea that she should never more behold the light of day, nor ever again hear the voice of friendship.

" Rosaline has sacrificed herself for me in vain!" sighed Erina—" yes! exiled to distant regions by her affection for me, she will depart in sadness, and live unblessed, daily mourning my wretched fate, of which she will be apprized by Agnes. She will, perhaps, accuse me of cruelty to her, and infidelity to friendship, in obstinately rejecting the means of effecting my release from this dungeon, by which I might profit by the ransom she has paid for my freedom—that ransom which has cost her so dear! I tremble to think that its price, already paid past recall, has been the sacrifice of her inclinations, her bondage indissoluble to a character unfitted to afford her happiness; while her sensibility and fortune must be devoted to his caprices, his power, his pleasure, and perhaps become victims to his indifference and total neglect!

"Beloved, pre-eminently noble girl! best of friends! how strongly hast thou bound my soul to thee! Ah! that in dying I could repay the debt of gratitude I owe thee, by restoring thee to that freedom and happiness thou hast so generously relinquished for ever to purchase mine! How joyfully should I lay down my life to ensure the felicity of thine! Alas! that blessing is denied me; instead of consoling thee, I am doomed to aggravate those very sufferings thy love for me incurred!" Erina trembled with agitation, an icy dew stole on her frame, and a sick faintness overpowered her so entirely, that she sunk upon the chilling pavement. For a length of time she lay motionless, and almost senseless, while her ideas wandered beyond her power of directing them: from a state of mental stupor, and corporeal torpor, she endeavoured to restore herself by rising from the cold damp floor. It was the wish of living for her loved Rosaline's sake, that roused her dying spirits, and invigorated her feeble frame.

Erina groped round the dungeon in hopes of finding something on which she might recline, and at last stumbled on what felt like a decaying plank laid across two stones; on this she seated herself, and enveloping herfelf as close as possible in her coarse vestments, she leaned her aching head upon

her hand as her elbow rested on her trembling knees, and fell into a deep train of reflection.

As she ruminated on the situation of her beloved friend, on the sufferings and real calamities to which she might be exposed, far from every being dear to her heart, in a distant country, perhaps a climate that might prove direfully fatal to the gentle and delicate mind and frame of Rosaline; whose soul was all sentiment and softness, whose health required the kind attentions of some one interested more tenderly in her welfare and ease, than her own generous nature ever permitted her to be in any thing concerning herself; as all these thoughts pressed heavily on the heart of Erina, it seemed ready to burst with agonizing sensations, and she demanded of her judgment if she was justified in stubbornly refusing to free herself from a situation from which she might liberate herself by acceding to the proposals of the lady abbess; and thus obtain the means of becoming the faithful attendant, the protecting companion, and the affectionate consoler of Rosaline.

Erina's thoughts became bewildered in an internal disputation on the most interesting and important subject of virtue and friendship, in a point where it seemed almost impossible to reconcile

the obligations of the first with the duties of the latter. Affection, interest, and morality, appeared at perplexing variance. To desert her kindest friend, to whom she owed unbounded gratitude, at a time when the offices of friendship would be essential to her peace, absolutely requisite, perhaps, to the preservation of her life---how could that be reconcilable to religion? Yet, to obtain the power of serving that friend by duplicity and fraud, in an act of mean evasion, by writing a long catalogue of falsehoods in deceitfully declaring, by a voluntary and solemn asseveration, a resolve to perform religious vows, when that omniscient Power to whom she thus bound herself virtually to dedicate the whole of her life in monastic austerities, knew she merely promised this to effect a steady secret purpose of acting a perjury, in evading the fulfilment of the bond, which she tacitly swore to perform by writing the oaths, and subscribing to them formally by her signature. All this chain of complicated and deliberate deception struck the refined and noble soul of Erina with horror; and she felt she never could have executed the numerous frauds required, even had she determined on their adoption. "No!" cried the innocent girl, in parley with herself, "my reason tells me we cannot stand absolved in infringing our duty to the great Creator for the perform-

ance of any social obligation. The Almighty ever watchfully guards his virtuous suffering creatures. He will preserve my friend, who places her trust too truly in Providence to fail in obtaining its support in every distress. Thus assured, I commit thee to Heaven's care in peace; and holding myself innocent of any wilful offence against its commandments, I also resign myself in full dependance on the Supreme Disposer of events, and ever pray for my loved Rosaline's happiness.

"Conscience, that faithful monitor, that internal voice of the Divinity, who has placed it in every human breast as the guardian of his laws,—that whisper of the Holy Spirit, tells me we can never be justified in pursuing criminal means to effect the best actions; and that voice, whilst it pronounces a religious truth as my guiding precept, tells me also, that honour forbids me to render myself, by its breach, unworthy of my descent, and the friendship of Rosaline—that exalted girl, who would despise and even abhor me were I capable of immorality or dishonour. Virtue admits no sophistry in its precepts, which must be preserved pure as its immaculate source.

"Hence, all ye base suggestions of Satan! lies clothed by fallacious casuistry in the garb of

truth, and therefore dangerous deceivers to sin for apparent virtue's sake!"

Erina's ardent mind was elevated to enthusiasm by the sublimity of her reflections; she threw herself on her knees, and clasping her hands, raised them, with the utmost fervour of devotion, in sincere penitence for the momentary irresolution in her principles of rectitude. Her soul, prostrated at the celestial throne, was illumined with a beam of heavenly wisdom; and pious resignation diffused in her bosom that holy peace, which must ever accompany the consciousness of deserving the mercy and protection of Omnipotence. "Grant me, great Ruler of the world," she cried with energy, "power to withstand every temptation to infringe thy laws; and may I ever bear with patient submission to thy will, the sorrows with which thou art pleased to try my religious obedience!"

Erina rose from her supplicating posture, strengthened and composed by the true piety which renders every situation tolerable to a faithful christian. She felt assured, that *he who permits the trial of his creatures, will afford them assistance to eschew those errors they solicit grace*

to avoid; and whenever he sees fit, he will have power to deliver them from the evils which they have endured with resignation: for innocence and virtue are the particular delight, and peculiar care of the righteous and omnipotent Author and Director of all things.

CHAP. V.

" True devotion to Heaven is love of our fellow-creatures. Charity is religion; for our Saviour tells us to love one another. This was the new commandment he enjoined an observance of, as a test of attachment and obedience to him; and his apostles repeat, that charity will hide a multitude of sins, and love is the fulfilling of the law."

SHUT out from every ray of light, and out of the reach of any sound, Erina had nothing to guide her ideas relative to the course of time, except the succession of her thoughts. Hour after hour seemed to pass while she remained unnoticed, as if entirely forgotten. " Surely," thought the alarmed girl, " those who have confined me here, cannot purpose to let me linger here neglected, to perish by a cruel death!" She shuddered as this idea crossed her fancy.

At length, the sound of approaching footsteps roused her to attention. Her prison door was un-

barred, and unlocked, and several nuns entered. One of them bore a lamp with a basket, from which she took a portion of bread, which she placed in silence beside Erina, setting, also, a bottle near her. Others of the sisterhood brought a paillasse, or straw mattress, with a blanket; after unloading themselves of which, they departed without uttering a syllable. The nun who bore the basket, took from it a candle, and lighting it to guide them through the mazes leading from the dungeon, left the lamp in a recess, where an hour-glass and human skull marked mortality.

As soon as the massy door was closed and fastened, Erina sighed: she looked around on the horrors of her prison; it was spacious, and arched with rough-hewn discoloured stone, which gave it some resemblance to a cavern: the similitude was increased by its rugged walls, encrusted in many parts by variously tinted mould, nurtured by damps that glistened to the faint gleam of the lamp: its weak rays extended not to every corner of the dungeon, and its deep shade, in many places, led the sight into so dark a gloom, that the imagination was left at full liberty to picture views of terror suited to the scene where the desponding mind, in solitude, was led to muse on saddest subjects. The sepulchral darkness, the icy chilness,

and total silence reigning here, presented to the fancy nothing but themes of human dissolution; the tomb and yawning grave here seemed to wait the cold and lifeles remains of mortality,—which led the thoughts to its mouldering decay; while, on the other hand, the confidence in a resurrection placed before mental vision embodied spirits rising from death to immortality: and here fancy might paint ethereal forms of celestial brightness, and clothed in glory, beckoning saints to heaven, to join with angels in choral songs of pious praise; while infernal demons, with scorpion lashes, and hideous yells, turned offenders, starting from the horrid grave, into the flaming abyss of endless misery their sins had merited: and here the terrified imagination was led to wander amidst the troubled ghosts and perturbed spectres who groan eternal remorse that their perverse wills, in a mortal state of probation, chose to reject the offered salvation; which, accepted, would have placed them in bliss, the view of which, to them now unattainable, racks them with envious torments. Such were the thoughts and reflections of the imprisoned girl.

United to enthusiasm of sentiment and a powerful imagination, Erina possessed a strength of understanding to direct the energy of her feelings, and

the flights of fancy, to moral, profound, and correct ideas; and all the sensations the scene of melancholy desolation now surrounding her presented, tended to improve all the faculties of her soul. Her education and sense placed her out of the reach of every superstitious dread; and her rational apprehensions, subdued by pious reflections and religious reliance on the Governor and Preserver of the world, made Erina feel assured that the Supreme Intelligence, which protects the minutest works of the universe, would not neglect to bestow on her that care she had ever most devoutly and now earnestly solicited.

A train of thoughts, at once sublime, awful, and yet consolatory, filled her mind with past incidents, her present situation, and future prospects. Grateful for all the blessings retrospection told her she had enjoyed, submissive in the distresses in which she now was involved, and relying on the mercy of Heaven to render her future circumstances such as must ultimately tend to individual and general advantage, since infinite wisdom guided the result of every human occurrence, she felt spiritual comfort, and even happiness, in the midst of local wretchedness and corporeal sufferings: for the damp chill of the vault, which had struck her with a cold tremor, and a noisome effluvia, on

entering the dungeon, had, in the course of many hours, produced a real indisposition. Her head was tortured with an intense pain, she felt a nausea, and general bodily uneasiness, such as is indicative of an approaching fever. Erina lothed the idea of eating: however, as she was convinced that night had far advanced, and considered that as she had tasted nothing since the morning, it would be weakness to fast until the next day, and knowing that the preservation of life is a duty in every possible situation, she forced herself to eat a small portion of the bread allowed her, and drank some of the beverage, which she found to be simple water. Thankful to Providence for this homely sustenance, she offered her orisons as a grace; and then trimming her lamp, and enveloping herself in the blanket, that was the only covering afforded to her hard mattress, the oppressed girl lay down to rest her weary limbs. Reflection, instead of sleep, visited her for a number of hours, until exhausted nature sunk her into that kind of perturbed slumber which is more tiring than watchfulness.

In the course of some time, Erina awoke with a sudden start to utter darkness. Her head felt dull, her eyes heavy, and her lips parched, while every joint seemed stiffened, and a sensation of

general pain almost disabled her from moving. She stretched herself, however, and fell into an unquiet doze. On awaking from a state of tedious stupefaction, she lay a long while motionless from extreme lassitude: her thoughts, however, more active than ever, ran busily on a thousand interesting themes, when suddenly she believed the darkness around her gave place to an illumination of effulgent light, and that, issuing from a bright cloud, a spirit of beatitude, clothed in robes of celestial radiance, beckoned her with one hand, whilst with the other, uplifted, it pointed to a crown of glory, which, suspended by angels, shewn more brilliantly than the blaze of any diamond; each star that engemmed this heavenly diadem, sparkling with ethereal fire, shot rays of dazzling lustre, vivid as the sun-beam that shines too strong a flame for mortal eyes to gaze upon.

Soon as the radiant vision brightened the warm fancy of Erina, she sprung from her recumbent posture, nerved with delight, and bounding forward with elastic step, she stretched her arms, crying, with enthusiasm---"Blest spirit of my father! thy obedient daughter is ready to obey thy summons!---I come, I come, to share with thee eternal joys!" Uttering these words, she threw herself forward on one knee to seize and embrace the

charming vision, which seemed to smile in sainted ecstasy; but as the enthusiastic girl extended her hands, she felt a clay-cold form within her grasp: she leaned forward, however, and found her bosom chilled by an icy touch; when, suddenly as the bright vision had appeared to Erina, it seemed to vanish from her sight. She trembled and sighed---her spirits sunk, her momentary strength was exhausted; she reclined her beating temples against the cold rugged wall near which she kneeled, and shivering at the chilling touch of the damp rough stone against which her bosom leaned, she moaned and fell senseless on the pavement of her dungeon. Long lost to reflection, she was at length roused by her own groans. With the return of recollection, that of the vision recurred as a dream that often remains strongly stamped upon the imagination while it is sensible all was an illusion of fancy. Erina felt her ideas inclined to wander, and endevouring to controul their wild disorder, she crept to seek her mattress, and finding it after some search, she covered herself with the blanket, and dozed and waked alternately.

Startled, at length, by a ray of light, she looked around, while her thoughts were so occupied by the late vision, that she expected again to behold it. The object, however, that approached, bore no

similitude to the fancy-formed spirit of her late father; and Erina, in bitter disappointment, motioned it from her whilst it continued to advance. As it came near her she shuddered and screamed; and shrinking from its touch, cried, "Avaunt, demon of horror!"

The figure then bending over her, sighed and shook its head. Erina started. She heard a tone of compassion, and melting into the first tears she had shed since her entrance into the dungeon, found herself relieved, and pressed the strange hand which was alternately applied to her head and bosom.

"Angel of light! sweet soul of benevolence!" ejaculated Erina, fixing her eyes wildly on those now gazing with solicitude on her, "pardon me that I did not at first recognize in thee my best friend! my beloved, my amiable Rosaline! Good Heavens! you are greatly changed!"—then smiling sweetly, she added in a soft tone, "yet I love thee! and ever shall under every alteration." She started forward, and embracing an attendant nun, sunk fainting into her arms.

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Insensible to all that followed, Erina did not recover her recollection until after a considerable interval; when coming to herself she found she had been removed to the infirmary, and was surrounded by the sisterhood, with the superior seated beside her bed. Erina sighed heavily on recognizing her; the abbess smiled while she interrogated the poor patient concerning her health, and on finding her composed and rational, exhorted her mildly to submit to what had been required of her.

Upon this address Erina relapsed into the ravings of her delirium, and said, with an emotion of horror, "No---no---I am not in my senses; but I cannot, I will not, even in distraction, write and sign falsehoods. I will never promise to take the veil, for I do not intend to profess myself. Where is my friend, Lady Kinross? She came to see me, and you cruelly tore us from each other---but no matter, she will not forsake me; she will deliver me from the power of cruel injustice; she will come in three days to ————. Erina stopped short, and paused. A recollection stole through the confusion of her ideas a conviction of wandering; she was, although in the derangement of a high fever, so much mistress of her mind as to be aware that even the incoherency of her thoughts

and speech might, in betraying her project, not only prevent the possibility of its execution, but that she might also, in her ravings, expose the kind Agnes to discovery as an accomplice in the plan of Rosaline, and thus subject those faithful friends to danger and distress. In consequence of this dread Erina resolved on total silence; and maintained it notwithstanding the derangement of her intellect, and the natural inclination, in consequence of it, to talk incessantly on the theme of her disturbed ideas.

The lady abbess felt all her late displeasure at the obstinacy of her refractory noviciate return with double force, on perceiving that no state of suffering, nor condition of mind, could effect what appeared requisite to prove, for the honour of her convent, that conviction, instead of compulsion, had made Erina a votary to the religious habit.

"You can never again see Lady Kinross," said the indignant superior. "Your friend called on me, five days since, on her way to the port, whence she was instantly to embark for the East-Indies, with her husband, the Viscount de Briançon. She wept much on learning that your perverse conduct had subjected you to a rigorous confinement, which precluded the possibility of her taking leave

of you. She is now many leagues from Paris, pursuing her voyage; and you are left to regret and lament in vain that stubborn behaviour which has robbed you of this last sight of your late companion."

Each word the abbess uttered struck a dagger to Erina's heart; the intelligence now communicated, by concentrating her thoughts and feelings to one point, acted with a surprising power to collect her late scattered ideas and senses. The full force of her understanding resumed its empire; and her returning reason rendered her most keenly sensible to the dreadful misfortune, now ascertained beyond all doubt, that in the departure of Rosaline every prospect of escape, and all hopes of release from a life of misery and perpetual imprisonment, were extinct. Erina sighed deeply, wept bitterly, and endeavoured to reconcile herself to her dreadful fate. Although bereaved of every thing that could render her existence desirable, she took willingly all the lothsome remedies that were administered for her illness, from a conviction that no being had a right to throw away life, and that to reject the means of preserving it was actual suicide.

Her fever ceased to rage with violence, and on

the following day she felt herself so much restored, that the nun who attended her relaxed in watching her. Being left alone at the hour of dinner, she was visited for the first time on that day by Agnes, who, smiling sweetly, put into her hands the following billet, and disappeared.

"DEAR and persecuted victim of cruelty! I have not been able till the present moment to assure you I watch assiduously over your interest. I thank Heaven for your restoration to reason and returning health, which recurring apparently as if by miracle, convinces me that Providence, by succouring you under oppression, will relieve you from it, and avenge injustice.

"Your friend Lady Kinross, having taken leave of all her acquaintance to evade suspicion of intending your rescue, and to mislead conjecture respecting the means of your flight, lives with the viscount in concealment at Paris, while she is supposed to be already embarked; and with the assiduity of true friendship maintains a secret communication with me, in order to watch over your safety, and aid your escape. Let this certainty revive your spirits, and console your mind. I dare not hold any conversation with you, as I am afraid of being overheard by the sisterhood; I therefore

take this mode of informing you, that your present situation is favourable for your escape, as it is removed from the part of the convent where the nuns live.

" To night, after the last service, and your nurse has retired to repose, when I have reason to think we may pass the cloisters without detection, you will see me enter the infirmary. Watch my approach, and prepare yourself to follow in silence whither I shall lead you to join your loved friend and her husband, who are to be in waiting for you; and who will, on a signal from me, concerted between us, throw a ladder of ropes over the south wall, which I will assist you to mount. Remember, for our safety depends on it, we are both enjoined to total silence---even an adieu uttered in a whisper might betray us both; therefore, our farewell must be a mute embrace, and a silent tear. Added to which, I seize this opportunity of assuring you, amiable and beloved Erina, that the prayers of Agnes will, while she lives, be offered regularly and devoutly for the felicity of those companions, whose presence, for a while, enlivened the dreary abode to which her fate confines her, and the remembrance of whose friendship will gild, with sweetly tender recollections, the days and last hours of herreligious seclusion."

The surprised and rejoiced Erina wept tears of affection and warmest gratitude over the friendly nun's consolatory address. The heart of the late suffering girl seemed bursting with the mingled sensations of pious thankfulness for the extraordinary mercies of Providence, and tenderest attachment to those amiable and faithful friends who were the ministers of Heaven in relieving her from a state of wretchedness.

As she had that day been allowed to rise, and was now without any observer of her actions, she committed the note she had just received to the flames, as she had been accustomed to burn Rosaline's letters, lest, through any casualty, her secret correspondence should, by falling into the hands of the superior, or any of the sisterhood, betray to anger and punishment the good Agnes, to whose friendly interference and aid she was so much indebted for this only solace in affliction.

Renovated to spirits by her means, Erina felt that the ecstasy, in expectation of enfolding Rosaline to her heart after so long a separation, would be chastened by the necessity of embracing Agnes for the last time, previous to leaving her for ever a prey to all the melancholy of an eternal seclusion from that world which still had the

strongest tie in nature upon her affections: for the nun daily gave a tear of sad regret to the remembrance of that tender connection of her youth, which the lapse of ten years, aided by a formal dissolution, had had no power to break. "Poor Elise de Vermont!" frequently ejaculated Erina, as she remarked her sigh and shed a tear to the memory of du Beaumanoir; who, although no longer her husband, was still beloved by Agnes, without a crime, as the father of her child, whom a cruel fate had compelled her to give up when she was obliged to sacrifice herself at the altar, as the victim of an imprudent marriage. And, "Poor Agnes!" now sighed Erina, giving a tear of affectionate compassion to that faithful friend, while a smile adorned her pallid face at the prospect of joining Rosaline, as the companion of that exile she had incurred for her sake.

The midnight hour was expected with fluttering anxiety. Left to an early repose, Erina counted with impatience the strokes of the convent clock, marking the hours of eleven and of twelve. The chapel bell then rang to the last service, which being concluded, a dead silence reigned throughout the nunnery. Erina heard nought but the palpitation of her own heart, which, in sympathy with

the pulsations of her temples, appeared to sound upon her pillow.

The old nun, who had attended as nurse, worn down by years, and fatigued by late watching her patient, and the labours of the day, was now buried in the soundest sleep. Erina rose, and throwing on her habit hastily, waited the approach of Agnes; who, true to her appointment, stole into the infirmary, and beckoning Erina, was followed by her in cautious silence, and with a light tread. As soon as they had gained the cloisters, the amiable nun encircled her charge in an embrace, and then, supporting her feeble steps, led her towards the south wall.

The night was dark and tempestuous; the ground was slippery with ice and snow, driving with a keen frosty blast, which almost palsied the feeble limbs of the trembling invalid as she passed over the congealed heaps that lay scattered on the garden paths. On turning the angle of the chapel in their way to the southern wall, Agnes and Erina were startled, and shocked beyond description, by the sudden appearance of three monks, stationed evidently on posts of attentive watch.

Instantly conjecturing that their scheme, by some

means, had been detected, the alarmed nun and her young companion turned quickly to retrace their steps back to the convent portal; and, winged with terror, fled some yards over the difficulties of their rugged walk. Erina then finding herself unable to proceed in her escape with sufficient speed to outrun the monks, who were now pursuing them with eager haste, disengaged herself from the supporting arm of Agnes, crying to her with hurried trepidation, "Leave me—leave me to my fate, too generous friend! and, for the sake of my peace, avoid the inevitable destruction that awaits me! Go, and save me from the distress of involving you in punishment, that, alone, I shall meet with fortitude. I will no longer impede you in the flight you may effect, and which I find impossible from my weakened powers."

Erina, with courage, now faced her pursuers, and stood supporting her feeble frame against the chapel gate; but Agnes, instead of escaping with the celerity which would effectually have secured her retreat, and prevented entirely her being detected as an accomplice or aider of the fugitive noviciate, observing her ready to faint from terror and fatigue, clasped her in her arms, crying, "I am incapable of deserting that generous friend, who boldly braves the utmost danger to save me

from it. Erina, I will share thy punishment to alleviate thy sufferings; and in following thy heroic example, prove myself worthy of thy affection."

The monks, who had now reached her, seized her, and grasped the fainting Erina, ejaculating, "Thank Heaven, we have at length found and secured you both!"

Agnes threw herself, nearly senseless, with despair and terror on the icy bosom of Erina, exclaiming, ere she swooned, "Sweet victim of early sorrow and misfortune! angelic girl! beloved companion of my grief! I learn from thee innumerable lessons of exalted virtue. In thee is seen the perfection attainable by human nature when it becomes the aim of mortals: by thy example I learn, that duty comprehends, in one great system, every obligation both moral and religious, social and pious. Thou hast taught me that *true devotion to Heaven is love to our fellow-creatures. Charity is religion; for our Saviour tells us to love one another: this was the new commandment he enjoined, an observance of a test of attachment and obedience to him; and his apostles repeat, that charity will hide a multitude of sins, and love is the fulfilling of the law.*"

CHAP. VI.

"Every person should be deterred by morality, as they ought to be restrained by honour, from trifling with the soft affections of the heart of sensibility: for a captive of love, made in the wanton sport of coquetry, is a disgraceful triumph of wickedness, as well as folly, and can only be flattering to the contemptible passion of vanity; which, in exciting tender feeling without an intention of repaying it, is equally dishonest as barbarously cruel."

TO all that now followed, Agnes and Erina were insensible. The nun was seized with a succession of fainting fits, from which she was with much difficulty restored to recollection: and Erina, much debilitated by the violent illness that had for many days confined her to bed, relapsed into a raging fever, attended by delirium, which rendered her unconscious of every thing passing around her.

On a return of reason she found herself in a strange chamber, extremely darkened; beside her bed sat two females, attentively watching her. The face that first met her gaze was not unknown; the benevolent glances of the humid eyes rivetted on Erina, were perfectly familiar to her, although confusedly recognized. Raising herself, and bending forward with an enquiring look, she saw the second female throw herself upon her knees in a touching attitude of tender solicitude; and in the soft azure eyes of the anxious attendant, beheld her much loved Rosaline!

"Friend of my soul!" cried Erina, starting from her bed, "tell me if thou art really my long-lost Rosaline; or if my fancy, filled with thy idea, cheats me into a vain belief of enjoying the presence of my first, my best, my dearest friend!"

The smiling Rosaline, in silence, extended her arms towards Erina, who fell into the embrace of friendship with a burst of hysteric ecstasy. The embrace was long, ardent, and repeated, to express the rapturous sensations of two sincere, warm, and virtuous hearts, which experienced an enthusiasm of sentiment language could but feebly speak even in its tenderest words.

In the first tumult of joyful surprise, Erina enquired not by what means she had been restored to liberty and happiness, from the most dreadful of all possible situations, that had deprived her of her faculties: the recollection of that moment when she saw herself delivered into the power of three monks, whom she had believed the confessors of the convent whence she was endeavouring to escape, threw her into a tremor of agitation even in the protecting arms of Rosaline, whilst assured by the voice of friendship that every difficulty was surmounted, all peril past, and that she was safely sheltered in the bosom of security and affection.

Erina trembled, wept, smiled, and hanging on the neck of her attendant and beloved friend, gave a sigh to the remembrance of Agnes. "Dear, faithful friend!" ejaculated the weeping girl, "kind guardian of my preservation! to whose care I am indebted for the felicity I now enjoy, where art thou now, amiable and beloved companion of my late imprisonment? Perhaps thou art, at this moment, lingering in the dismal dungeon where I was immured." Erina shuddered; and, demanding if Rosaline could inform her of the fate of Agnes, she burst into a passion of tears.

The gentle Lady Kinross, alarmed at the violent emotion of her invalid friend in the enfeebled state of her health, soothed her into composure, by an assurance that Agnes was not in a situation of any peril or suffering. Then, beckoning to her companion in attendance on Erina, Rosaline said, in a cheerful tone, "Come hither my associate nurse, and unite with me in convincing my patient, that her good friend, the nun, is perfectly safe from all danger, and that her happiness wants nothing to render it complete, except the perfect recovery of Erina."

As the unknown female approached with emotion, and gently touched the hand of Erina, the agitated girl exclaimed in accents of pleasure, mingled with doubt, "Whom do I see? Agnes! No, it cannot be:—the countenance is like the amiable nun's expressive face—yet the figure is——"

"That of Elise de Vermont!" interrupted Rosaline, smiling.

Erina repeated the name with a tone of anxious enquiry; and the now recognized companion of the two friends, greeting each other with a kiss of amity, identified herself to be really the being whose fate had so often, and now particularly,

interested the equally surprised and delighted Erina.

A thousand eager enquiries marked her anxiety to learn the particulars of her present situation, which appeared to her not less extraordinary than it was happy: and Rosaline, charmed to complete the joy of her friend in yielding to her earnest request to be informed of the events which had liberated herself and Agnes from the convent, began the following recital:

"It is necessary, my dear Erina, that I should apprize you of my having formed an acquaintance with the Viscount du Beaumanoir after your return to the convent. The knowledge of his history, and the air of melancholy which marked the indelible impression his fate had made on his heart, attracted both the interest and esteem of mine. He was soothed by my compassion, regarded me as the confidential friend of Agnes, and attached himself to me as a sincere one. On learning from me the state of his ever loved Elise, he conceived the romantic idea of carrying her off from the convent; and consulted with me relative to the means of effecting his wish. What, at first, appeared impracticable to my fears, the ardour of his passion prompted him to purpose. He re-

solved on an attempt to rescue her from a situation she had entered into by compulsion of circumstances, although the conduct she had pursued was a voluntary sacrifice of her dearest inclinations to the hardest duty. The viscount was aware, her principles would oppose her eloping with him, and he therefore determined on carrying her off by force. This scheme, which had seemed wild on its first suggestion, assumed a feasible aspect, when the necessity of your escape from the same prison offered a favourable opportunity of making it a kind of double plot, by which means our counter-projects ensured, or at least facilitated, the execution of our plan by mutual assistance; as Agnes, in consenting to become an aider in your release, unsuspectingly operated towards her own rescue, which she would have rejected as criminal had it been proposed to her consideration. That she might be saved the pain of deliberating on an action she would have thought it her duty to decide against, and that she might be spared all future distress of mind that would have accompanied either the steady refusal or acceptance of flight, du Beaumanoir resolved on making her perfectly passive, instead of rendering her, by consultation, any way wilfully accessary to what he was about to undertake in her cause and his own. For this reason, he requested his intentions might

be concealed from you, to secure against any thing transpiring which could alarm the timidity of Agnes at that time, or occasion her conscience scruples, regrets, or remorse in future.

" The Viscounts du Beaumanoir and de Briançon, who were my advisers and assistants in my double scheme, judged it requisite to make the Chevalier St. Amand privy to our designs, and an associate in their venturesome enterprize, in which his aid in effecting it, and afterwards, might be necessary.

" Accordingly, being taken into consultation, he consented to assume with them the disguise of monks, and scale the convent wall, to watch your expected approach with Agnes, and secure you both. Your flying them was fortunately obviated by your inability to evade them, as was foreseen; and your fainting with Agnes accelerated their carrying her off without the resistance we feared from her, notwithstanding our solemn injunctions to her to preserve the profoundest silence, lest your voices might betray you to detection in the convent.

" With some difficulty the chevalier and his associates got you both over the wall unobserved,

and conveyed you and your companion, in insensibility, to the carriage in waiting with me. We were already some distance from Paris, ere Agnes was aware of what had occurred during a succession of swoons. Having carefully enveloped you both in the warmest covering, to save you alike from the severity of the weather, as to guard against your being recognized as late inhabitants of a convent, lest it might lead to impertinent conjecture and expose you to discovery, we travelled with speed to a sequestered spot, in an opposite direction from the route we at first pursued. In that retired place we consulted on future measures, and having avoided any possibility of being traced, or suspected as fugitives, we journeyed on, as quickly as your situation, my dear Erina, permitted with safety, until we gained our present station, which is in the vicinity of our port of embarkation. As all our friends at Paris, except our trusty cousins, the chevalier and his bride, believe the viscount and I have sailed from these shores, you are secure from every danger of falling into the power of the lady abbess; and we only wait your perfect re-establishment in health to bid adieu to France, where, I trust, we shall leave every care behind us.

"It required the united persuasions of the

Viscount du Beaumanoir, de Briançon's solicitations, and my entreaties, to reconcile your fugitive companion to remain in the world. It was the intention of Elise, for we must no longer give her the appellation of Agnes, since she has quitted the habit with which she assumed a religious name in exchange for her baptismal one, to retire to some convent distant from that to which she could not return without extreme uneasiness, and more danger of direful consequences from the superior's anger; as having been the abettor of your escape, would condemn her to the most rigorous chastisementment, even were the lady abbess and her confessors assured that her own rescue had been attempted without her remotest suspicion or smallest encouragement.

"The voice of friendship, and the entreaties of love have, however, with much difficulty, convinced her reason, as well as her heart, that her future duty, both moral and religious, will be best fulfilled by acknowledging the bonds of her marriage, instead of a vain attempt to break them by imagining herself tied by religious vows. As Elise fainted, instead of swearing to observe them, she could not be guilty of any breach of oaths, unless she were now, under a power to do otherwise, to act a perjury of her wedded faith,

in voluntarily forsaking him to whom she must, by divine laws, be bound indissolubly till death, as the voice of Heaven itself, shall annul the most solemn and sacred of all human engagements.

" Elise is now persuaded, that she can pretend to no right to dispute the claims of the lawful possessor of her affections; especially since the viscount is now entirely master of himself, and at liberty to perform the obligation he owes to the being he is bound to love and cherish while life remains: for religion pronounces, that those whom God has joined in holy wedlock, can never be disunited by human will. Those, whose caprices and passions cruelly separated the youthful pair, are now no more. However, as it is necessary to evade pursuit in present circumstances, and the health of Elise requires amelioration, she joins us, with her lover, as a companion of our voyage, as far as the Madeira Islands, where our vessel is to touch in its passage to India. A relation of the Viscount du Beaumanoir is married to a Portuguese gentleman, settled at Funchal, where Elise is to wait, under the protection of the viscount's amiable cousin, until he obtains a dispensation from the holy see to render his re-union with Elise valid; and as one of the cardinals who has most influence with the pope, is a relation of Monsieur du Beaumanoir's, there is every rea-

son to hope, that neither difficulty nor delay will attend the solicitation already made at the court of Rome for a dispensation, which is to be forwarded by the Mediterranean to the place of their destination, and may probably reach the Madeiras before we arrive there.

" In the expectation of assisting at the joyful ceremony of their re-union, let us, my dear Erina," said Rosaline, sweetly smiling, " enjoy the pleasure of having promoted the happiness of amiable and faithful friends. You, my Erina, have always loved and esteemed Elise; and her attention and innumerable kind offices to us both, demand our warmest gratitude and affection. With me she has for a week watched your sick couch with a sister's solicitude."

" And I with a sister's love," cried Erina, seizing and pressing to her bosom the hands of Rosaline and Elise, " thank you both, for cares and benefits which I can never, never repay.

" Let me congratulate my Elise on her felicity, in which my heart most feelingly participates." Erina's countenance was illumined with an evanescent blush, called on her pallid face by lively sensibility; but the angelic smile that marked the joy

she experienced in the happiness of Elise, was empearled by a tear, that testified her heart was equally alive to the equivocal situation of Rosaline, whom she trembled to felicitate on her recent marriage. Irresolute how to address her on the delicate subject, Erina pressed and kissed the hand of her friend, while she bedewed it with a tear, and sighed out a wish for her felicity. The sympathy of character and friendship informed Rosaline of all that passed in Erina's soul; and, apprehensive that agitation might retard her re-establishment in health, said gaily, "Come, my little patient and charge, we must have no weeping: as I have the care and direction of you, I command smiles and cheerfulness as the best restoratives. Were I a physician, I should prescribe nothing but laughter, dancing, and singing; and I am sure I should quickly recover all my patients. As you, my dear Erina, are too weak to dance and sing, I must do that for you, while your smiles will exhilarate my spirits."

Erina again kissed and pressed the hand of her lively playful friend, and again sighing, thanked her for *all* she had done for her; adding, that such obligations were equally beyond valuation, as they were above any return. And Rosaline, telling her that to thank her would offend her, in a

sportive manner observed, that the privilege of *matronizing* her sweet friend Erina was a delight, great as it was honourable, and that as nothing could afford her so much happiness as her charming friend's society, all the gratitude was due to her as *conferring*, instead of *receiving* favours.

The assiduous attentions of her two amiable attendants, in a few days, restored Erina to a state sufficiently convalescent to admit of her quitting her bed and chamber, when the viscounts being introduced, congratulated her on her recovery.

The sweet invalid had preserved her beauty, notwithstanding the severity of her illness had faded the lustre of a brilliant complexion; but the exquisite loveliness of Erina depended on that perfect symmetry of feature, and expression of sentiment in each turn of her ever varying and ever admirable countenance, which wants no aid of colouring to make an impression on the heart of sensibility. The easy graces of her manner had also a fascinating charm; and her new acquaintance were struck with the most lively admiration, in seeing and conversing with the object of their late anxiety.

The Viscount du Beaumanoir was agreeable

both in his figure and address; and treated Erina as the beloved friend of his adored Elise. De Briançon was equally handsome, and possessed a vivacity that rendered him extremely pleasing. He behaved to Erina as a brother, and shewed such an assiduous gallantry to Lady Kinross, who called him always friend and cousin, in playful sport, and whom he always smilingly addressed as his "*Chere belle*," that Erina, who was a watchful observer of their manner to each other, flattered herself, that Rosaline had made a marriage which would render her happy, as the most perfect confidence seemed to subsist between her and de Briançon. His constant good-humoured pleasantry, and the lively ease of Lady Kinross, inspired Erina with hourly increasing pleasure; and she left the shores of France without any unhappiness, except what arose from the painful idea, that she was quitting a quarter of the globe endeared to her as the residence of her ever loved relations. On setting sail from the harbour of Brest, Erina sent a deep sigh on the wind which blew from the Isles of Britain; and dropping innumerable tears into the sea, she felt gratification in the idea, that those tears, mingling in the waves, might wash the coast of her beloved native land.

The ship in which the Viscount de Briançon had

taken his passage to the East, was a large and commodious vessel belonging to the French East India trade. The cabin allotted to Lady Kinross was below deck, spacious, and well fitted up with every conveniency for a long voyage, with accommodations for Elise and Erina, both of whom she wished to have as associates in her cabin; while another was provided for the viscount, which, although near, had no communication with the three ladies' apartment. In the cabin belonging to Rosaline, Erina found the most elegant and noble provision both for her dress and pleasures. Her costly and well-chosen wardrobe was beheld and admired with the most lively gratitude and affection for her delicate and munificent friend, whose more than sisterly attention had been bestowed to procure all possible happiness for the object of her fond solicitude: and while Erina observed every well-known volume of her library, now arranged on shelves for her use; saw the implements of painting disposed for her amusement on the voyage; and, above all, when her favourite harp presented itself to her sight, in the utmost preservation, the grateful girl shed tears of thankfulness and love on the bosom of that delicately generous friend, whose noble mind, in bestowing great and innumerable favours, felt that an obligation was conferred by their acceptance.

Their fellow passengers paid them many compliments of polite attention on their coming on board the ship, in which every thing gave a pleasing impression of great comfort, united with extreme novelty, and seemed to augur to the voyagers that the passage would be a party of pleasure.

The captain's table was excellently served; and the company at it, besides the commander, his officers, and the viscount's party, consisted of Madame d'Evreul and the Count de l'Armencour. The captain, and mates of the vessel, were men of polite education and agreeable conversation. Madame d'Evreul was young, pretty, lively, and pleasant; she was the wife of an officer in India, whom she was now going to join, although the pleasures of Paris had more charms for her than she expected to find in an Indian fort, where her husband had been ordered too suddenly to admit of her sailing with him. The count was an officer in the same regiment to which the viscount belonged. De l'Armencour was a man of consequence; he was a gentleman of the most finished manners and highest fashion, as well as birth; and united, in his air and address, the advantages of a polished courtier with all that distinguishes a military character. The versatility of his talents could not,

in a short acquaintance, discover either his numerous acquirements, or his disposition; and, although his abilities were immediately seen, and his conversation instantly pleased, Erina's penetration perceived that long observation alone could develop his real character. She pronounced, with less difficulty, that Madame d'Evreul was amiable.

On losing sight of the French coast, the waves of the Biscayan bay, agitated by the rude blasts of the north, tossed the ship so much, that Lady Kinross, with her two companions, confined themselves to their cabin, and an occasional visit to that of Madame d'Evreul, which communicated with the quarter-gallery, and was, consequently, their passage to the stern balcony, the round-house, and adjoining division, in which the passengers dined and supped.

After some days of rough weather, and a few weeks of gloom, which winter spreads over the northern sky in the month of February, the wind being favourable, drove the vessel onward in her course in the Atlantic. The ladies now were glad to leave their cabins to resume their place at the captain's table, and pass their evenings in the round-house, where they were always joined by the count and two viscounts, with the commander and the

officers belonging to the ship, when their watches did not call them on deck.

As the voyagers advanced towards the southern latitudes, the ocean was scarcely ruffled with the gentle breezes that wafted them towards the Madeiras. The bright sun-beams, darting through cloudless æther, glittered on the gently undulating deep from the rising till the setting of the effulgent luminary of day, when his rays, reflected by the moon, shone in softened lustre, and silvered the wide extended main, which seemed to sleep beneath the spangled heavens, thickly studded with living gems of other worlds, and distant suns of other systems: their radiance shot innumerable sparkles through the shades of night, speaking to the complative soul the wondrous wisdom, the astonishing power, and the merciful providence of their incomprehensible Author. Erina's heart soared, on devotion's wing, to his throne, as regularly as the morning rose, and as evening descended. She loved to meditate on her Creator both in the volume of nature, and in the sacred books of divine revelation, where each elucidated and proved the truths of the other. The blushing dawn and meridian blaze, the empurpled evening or solemn hours of night, were alike to her reflecting, yet cheerful mind, calculated to produce pious ideas

and improving thoughts. The soft serenity of the clear atmosphere inspired her with nothing but tranquil emotions as she walked the deck, leaning on the arm of her protecting friends, or sat between her loved Rosaline and Elise in the stern-gallery, to breathe the refreshing gale, that bore health on its wings, as it played on her snowy bosom and cheeks, tinting them with a deep glow of renovated health and exhilarated spirits. Her mind, composed by piety, and calm as the expanse of waters that reflected the clear deep azure of the æthereal canopy, bounded by naught but an interminable horizon, made her feel light as the zephyrs that fanned her; and she enjoyed existence with grateful adoration of the divine Being, on whose care relying with christian hope and humble confidence of faith, she felt no fear of evil: her conscious innocence supplied that store of happiness no earthly ills or troubles can ever destroy; and at peace with herself, she was equally so with all mankind. The severities she had lately endured, in recollection, awakened no sentiment but that of thankfulness at having escaped the painful trials to which her temper and virtue had been exposed: the latter was too exalted, and the former too sweet, to admit her feeling any resentment, even had the authors of her late distresses effected a prolongation of her sufferings, or thrown her into

real misfortunes, in endeavouring to avoid those miseries they inflicted in a cruel sentence of perpetual imprisonment.

Before her embarkation, she had commissioned Lady Kinross to write an apologetical justification of her conduct to the lady abbess, to be cleared from any suspicion of having placed herself under improper protection by her flight. Erina, at the same time, dispatched an affecting letter, explanatory of her situation and feelings, addressed to all her family, and directed to her revered grandsire, with a request that he would use his accustomed discretion in communicating its contents to her beloved mother and brother, in any manner his judgment might point out as the most effectual way to spare their sensibility, as much as she herself had endeavoured to save it, in refraining from the possibility of subjecting any of her beloved relations to distressing trials on her account. The performance of this act of filial duty and sisterly affection cost her many tears, with which she bathed the most touching adieus to her parents and brother. But, although each line was blotted with affecting testimonies of sorrow, at the cruel necessity to which she had been reduced of leaving her friends, instead of flying to their protection, she carefully guarded against any expression

of complaint, or displeasure, or one word that could be construed into a reproach.

Erina's mind was angelic, as her form and countenance were celestial in expression. The sweetness of her disposition rendered her manners enchanting; and the placidity of her soul, while it illumined her face with smiles, lurking in blooming dimples, gave her health, which inspired activity of mind. With returning strength and gaiety she resumed the elegant occupations of music, painting, ingenious works, and reading to amuse herself and friends during their voyage.

After a favourable passage, they descried Madeira, like an azure line in the distance. The sight of land, after having, for several weeks, seen nothing surrounding their solitary bark but an immeasurable extent of ocean, bounded only by cerulean æther, was an agreeable view to all the passengers, who assembled on the deck to watch their approach to land.

As they advanced to the wood-crowned heights of the island, which overhang the port of Funchal, its buildings, with the neighbouring villas, dispersed amidst vineyards, and embosomed in ever verdant groves of orange, lemon, and cedar trees, afforded

a most delightful prospect to those who had so lately quitted the bleak shores of France, where winter reigned, covering the hills with snow, and bellowing, with hoarse blasts, through leafless forests, and over foaming billows. At the Madeiras, the breath of spring floated on the gale, loaded with mingled sweets from orange blossoms, and innumerable buds and fragrant flowers, that bloomed in vernal freshness, and the full luxuriance of summer, in its prime, in that climate where the rigours of winter are never experienced.

The vessel had scarcely anchored in the bay, when the Viscount du Beaumanoir, accompanied by his friend de Briançon, went on shore to prepare his cousin for the reception of his loved Elise; who waited in trembling expectation his return. He soon came back to the ship, waving his handkerchief as he approached, to mark, by this salutation, the joy he experienced in hastening to communicate it to those, whose feelings were attuned to the sweet sympathies of friendship and of love. The charming Rosaline, and lovely Erina, were scarcely less solicitous than Elise to learn the intelligence brought by du Beaumanoir, or than he was impatient to inform them that he had found his relation delighted to see him, and still more so to contribute to his happiness. He

brought from Emanuel d'Arandilla, and his lady, the most pressing invitation to Lady Kinross and Erina, that they would honour them by accompanying Elise to their villa, and remain their guests to the last hour of the vessel's stay at Madeira. Du Beaumanoir added, that the long expected dispensation was already arrived; and that in consequence of that event, and an account, dispatched some time before he sailed, of his story, and his intended visit to his cousin, she had arranged every thing in expectation of his coming. The viscount was continuing to inform Elise and her kind friends, that every thing was ready for their immediate reception at his cousin's sweet abode, when Emanuel d'Arandilla himself came on board, to repeat his invitation in person, and to conduct his guests on shore.

The ladies' packages for disembarkation at the island were soon arranged, and being left under the care of the female attendant they had hired to wait on them during the voyage, Lady Kinross and her party got into the boat which brought their polite host; and, under a salute from the ship, rowed towards the shore. As they approached the beach, they were alarmed at the violent surf that broke with fury over the rough stones lying in heaps around the coast. The foaming waves,

rolling in succession towards the shore with hollow roars, and sudden dashes against the sides of the trembling boat, seemed to threaten its precipitation into the chasms between the boiling surges. Elise was nearly fainting with terror; and Rosaline, with trembling timidity, turned deadly pale while she clung round Erina; who, although agitated by a situation as new to her as it appeared alarming, conquered her fears to tranquillize those of her female companions in danger. On being highly praised and complimented by the gentlemen for the intrepidity displayed by her on this occasion, Erina took no merit in an exertion of her presence of mind, assuring her companions she was more indebted to the tenderness of her friendship for Rosaline and Elise, than to strength of courage, in the coolness with which she braved, in silent and undiscovered dread, an expectation of inevitable destruction: while, to the eye of reason, she evinced more real merit in overcoming the terror natural to female timidity, and in honestly avowing it, than in being insensible to what might occasion rational apprehension.

The villa of Emanuel d'Arandilla was situated on one of the woody acclivities hanging over the town of Funchal: the road leading to this romantic retreat wound through groves of orange, lemon,

and cedar-trees, interspersed with innumerable odoriferous shrubs. The house was an elegant structure, light and airy, calculated to temper by its surrounding shades and open architecture the heats of the climate. Pomegranates, myrtles, and a variety of fragrant flowers, bloomed in the garden, into the umbrageous alleys of which arcades led; where the luxuriant vines spread their verdant foliage, hanging in rich festoons between columns, and creeping round the high arched Venetian windows, beautifully decorated by pendant branches, waving to the slightest breath that played amidst the fanning trees. The inner apartments of this romantic dwelling were elegantly furnished, conveying at once an idea of taste and rural simplicity. The lady of the house united French ease with the modes of the country, and receiving her guests with the politest affability, made each of them feel perfectly at home; while the hospitable courtesies of Emanuel d'Arandilla, her husband, inspired his visitors equally with esteem for his worth, and a favourable impression of Portuguese manners, which here reigned in the most agreeable forms of his native country. From a spacious and elevated upper apartment, where a superb collation was spread for their guests, they admired the rich prospect that opened to their view. Over the surrounding tufted woods, vineyards, orchards,

corn-fields, and pastures, covered with herds and flocks, beneath the elevated site of the villa, the eye was led from the repose of sylvan and pastoral scenes to the buildings of Funchal; and beyond the bustle of the busy haunts of men, was seen the beautiful bay, illumined with the meridian sun, in whose bright beams the expanse of the waters glistened: here a moving scene of vessels, continually passing to and fro under sail, scudding before the wind or rowing against it, charmed the eye, while the streaming colours and pennants of the different ships riding at anchor in the harbour, afforded the most pleasing marine view in all its varieties.

The guests were delighted with the place, the elegant repast, and, above all, with the urbanity of their hosts, which heightened the enjoyment of the scene.

As the ship was to make but a short stay at the island, and the Viscount du Beaumanoir was equally impatient to be re-united to Elise, as she was desirous that her two friends, to whom she was so much indebted and so sincerely attached, should be present at the celebration of her second marriage, every possible haste was made in preparations for the ceremony, and an early day fixed

for a solemnity as extraordinary as it was happy. The circumstances of a once married pair, after a ten year's separation, again approaching the nuptial altar, and the union of the lover's with the husband's character, excited much mirth on the occasion; and the bride and bridegroom felt no alloy to their happiness, except in the regret that their little Louis, the pledge of their youthful love and union, had not lived to witness his parents' felicity. Although du Beaumanoir's character had been rendered serious by circumstances, on the day of his marriage vivacity marked his countenance and manner. Elise had perfectly recovered her health and gaiety of spirits, and, in her bridal dress, looked extremely handsome. The ceremony of their re-union was performed with much solemnity, and the evening of the wedding-day was devoted to the festivities of a ball and supper, to which all the people of the first consequence in the island were invited, amongst whom were included Madame d'Evreul and Count de l'Armencour.

A numerous assembly, composed of Portuguese ladies and gentlemen, made the voyagers fancy themselves in Portugal. The scene was equally agreeable, splendid, and novel; and the joyous occasion of the entertainment increased its interest,

and heightened his charms, to the feeling hearts of Rosaline and Erina.

All the arcades of the villa were illuminated, and every apartment in it thrown open and brilliantly lighted; which, together with a throng of gay and splendidly attired company, and the mirthful sounds of cheerful conversation and lively music, rendered the assembly a fairy scene. Notwithstanding the Viscountess du Beaumanoir was richly dressed, possessed both charms of face, figure, and manner, and although as the occasion of the entertainment she received innumerable compliments of congratulation mingled with much admiration, the British beauties bore away the palm of adulation as pre-eminently lovely. The delicately fair skin and blush of Lady Kinross, the soft azure of her eyes, her flaxen ringlets, and the airy lightness of a charming figure, formed a striking contrast with the brown complexions, and the black eyes and hair of the Portuguese *belles*, who possessed not her nymph-like form or motions; and she would have been thought, by the admiring *beaux*, the goddess of beauty herself, had not Erina, in the opinion of most of the cavaliers, eclipsed her lovely country-woman. They were, however, alike insensible of the effect they produced, as they were innocent of rivalry. Each,

in compliment to their dear friend the bride, had paid more than usual attention to the cares of the toilette; but those of Rosaline were directed solely to the arrangement of Erina's dress, while all the assiduity of that lovely girl was bestowed on the adjustment of Lady Kinross's decorations: and, in the ball-room, each admired the other, unconscious of their own charms and elegance, and both unmindful of the admiration herself excited, smiled with gratified exultation at the rivetted gaze and buzz of applause, that marked, to the eye of friendship, the complete triumphs of its object.

The Count de l'Armencour had engaged himself as the partner of Madame d'Evreul for the night. The master of the festivity and its ceremonies, offered his hand to Lady Kinross to open the ball. The bridegroom led his cousin and hostess through the dance; and the gallant de Briançon becoming the bride's attendant, a young Portuguese officer was introduced to Erina, as an humble suitor for the honour of her hand, which she gave him with a smiling grace:—she soon, however, discovered, that all conversation with her partner would be absolutely impossible, as they could not comprehend each other's language; he understood no more French than Erina had picked

up of the Portuguese tongue, during a four days' abode at the island; and notwithstanding her abilities and facility in learning languages were great, she found herself unable to exchange one sentence with her beau. He evinced extreme uneasiness at an inability of conversing with his fair partner, while the awkwardness of the situation so much amused her, as to increase, rather than lessen, the flow of her spirits.

Erina, ever beautiful, was particularly so when inspired by gaiety; and now finding smiles were the only means by which she could repay the courtesies of the young Portuguese, she threw into her looks and gestures all the sweetness of her disposition, and made her enamoured admirer think her the most charming of her sex. To express his adoration of her perfections was impossible, except by rapturous glances, and the frequent pressure of her beautiful hands, as he led her down the dance: and, although gallantry was new to Erina, she could not mistake its ardent professions in the mute, but most expressive language of his speaking eyes and tremulous touch. The blush of modesty his assiduities called forth, heightened her loveliness, and increased his love; and Erina felt relieved from an embarrassing situation, when

the separation of the company obliged her partner to retire.

At the conclusion of the ball, the cousin of du Beaumanoir startled Erina, by telling her she had committed a theft, for which she might probably be imprisoned in the island, and detained in chains for life; as the gentleman, whose heart she had stolen, had serious thoughts of taking vengeance. The affair, she added, might be adjusted by mutual composition; for which purpose the youthful cavalier, who was of high birth and great consequence at Lisbon, intended to learn, with all possible diligence, the English language, that he might offer his hand and fortune where his heart was a captive.

Erina smiled faintly, and coloured deeply at this address; but on understanding it had been made with more seriousness than she had at first imagined, she felt real uneasiness, instead of receiving any pleasure, from a certainty of the deep impression she had made on the young officer. She was not vain enough to imagine it could be indelible; but she resolved to take every precaution to avoid increasing it, from the equally amiable and just sentiment, *that every person should be deterred by morality, as they ought to be re-*

strained by honour, by trifling with the affections of the heart of sensibility; for a captive of love, made in the wanton sport of coquetry, is a disgraceful triumph of wickedness as well as folly, and can only be flattering to the contemptible passion of vanity; which, in exciting tender feeling, without an intention of repaying it, is equally dishonest as it is barbarously cruel.

CHAP. VII.

"Sociality is a moral obligation; to mingle, therefore, in harmless sports, and enjoy the pleasures of life, is, consequently, a duty we owe to ourselves, our fellow creatures, and the beneficent Creator, who desires us to consider and love mankind as brethren."

TWO days after the marriage of the Viscount du Beaumanoir, the ship being ready for sailing, the passengers were summoned on board; and Rosaline and Erina, with many tears, took leave of their dear friend Elise, and their kind hosts at Madeira; whence the viscount and his bride were soon to return to France. Notwithstanding the terror Madame du Beaumanoir had of the surf, she insisted on seeing her friends to the ship, where she parted from them with much sorrow, promising to write to Lady Kinross and her sister nun, as she frequently called Erina. That lovely

girl was deeply affected at the loss of so faithful a friend, and so charming a companion as Elise had been both in joy and in sadness; and scarcely regretted the distresses to which she had been exposed in the convent, since her melancholy confinement in it had been the occasion of Madame du Beaumanoir's release from a life of affliction to happiness, as perfect as mortals are permitted to taste in this sublunary state. On perceiving the viscountess weep bitterly as her husband called her on deck, Erina and Rosaline followed her to the side of the vessel, and whispered consolation to their departing friend, to whom they recalled the prospect of the happiness awaiting her on a return to her country, and to the embraces of her parents and attached sister, the Countess de la Villebrune: who would impatiently expect her arrival in France, from intelligence already dispatched of her marriage and intended return to her native land. Whilst Lady Kinross and Erina expatiated on the enjoyments Elise had in perspective, their thoughts, on the wings of fancy, flew to the isles of happy Britain, and deep-drawn sighs accompanied the tears both shed in silence to the remembrance of times past. The sorrowful adieus of the Viscount duBeaumonoir and his lady, the loss of their society, and the ship's departure from a place where the charms of a fine climate,

the richest beauties of nature, and where the kindest hospitality had afforded the voyagers all the pleasures of society, made such a strong impression on the keen sensibility of Rosaline and her companion, that they retired to weep in their cabin an affectionate farewell to Madeira, while the vessel sailed out of the harbour of Funchal.

As they proceeded on their course towards the Cape of Good Hope, the high peak of Teneriffe, visible from afar, attracted their notice; and, with the most favourable wind, they soon reached the tropic of Cancer, where encreasing heat marked that they were rapidly hastening to meet the approaching sun. His beams soon shewn vertically, and the weather was oppressively close: emerging from the torrid into the temperate zone, the air, in a short time, became refreshingly cool; and after a remarkably quick passage, they made the southernmost promontory of Africa, in the latter end of April. The sun now receding from them to the north of the equator, brought autumn to the southern hemisphere; and in one of its finest days in the beginning of May, the voyagers sailed into False Bay, at the Cape of Good Hope. The weather being uncommonly fine, brought the company on deck, where every countenance was gay as the sun was brilliant: his golden rays played

radiant on the sea-green rippling waves, which were gently agitated by the flowing tide, glittering as it rolled to the pebbly shore. Imagination could not picture a scene more beautifully enchanting than the prospect the stupendous chain of mountains presented, which encompassing the bay, formed an amphitheatre of romantic rocky heights, richly fringed with shrubs and trees, exhibiting every shade of verdure from darkest green to lightest yellow, as they overhung the stony acclivities; on the summits, and at the feet of whose steeps, and occasional gentle slopes, rural buildings and rustic picturesque habitations, interspersed amidst tufts of wood and empurpled heath, added a look of comfort to the wildness of the bare rugged crags and shrubby cliffs above, which towered to the clouds in various spiry forms, gilded by sun-beams.

As the vessel sailed into port, with colours streaming in the breeze that filled the sails, Erina and Rosaline were delighted to observe amongst the Dutch craft riding at anchor, a ship with the British ensign waving over the stern. The appearance of a vessel from the dominions of England, afforded the delicate sensibility of Lady Kinross, and her sentimental companion, a sensation of lively pleasure, such as an enthusiastic

soul receives from an unexpected interview with an old and long-lost friend. The sight, though pleasing, brought tears into the eyes of both, while both gave a sigh to the remembrance of those beloved beings they had left in Europe, endeared, if possible, doubly by the distance that separated them.

The Glenrock family, and Lord Herbert's, were ever in the thoughts of Rosaline, as in the mind of Erina; who, in the daily mention of their beloved Seraphina, paid a constant tribute of fidelity to friendship; while the tenderest homage of natural affection was hourly given by the dutiful girl to her parents and brother.

Erina had been as anxious to exculpate her relations of injustice towards her, in the opinion of Rosaline, as this amiable creature had been solicitous to shield Seraphina from any imputation of neglect towards them, in not having fulfilled her promise of writing immediately on her arrival in Spain; and the considerate Erina was not more ready to excuse the silence of their Spanish friend, which they attributed to any prevention except her being unmindful of them, than the gentle Lady Kinross was inclined to believe that the conduct of Erina's mother, which she had so warmly de-

fended with filial reverence, had been more unfortunate than blameable: as, from the knowledge of Father Murphy's temper, and principles of blind bigotry, they were both as ready to pardon the influence he had obtained over the yielding and mild nature of Mrs. O'Brien, as they were disposed to pity, rather than condemn the errors committed in an ardour of mistaken zeal in the cause of religion; since the goodness of the motive, in their candid judgment, justified and even sanctified the measures which had occasioned them both extreme suffering. Rosaline and Erina were such true and pious christians as to hold every thing sacred relating to religious opinions. Affectionate were the thoughts each now gave to every member of the Glenrock family, and that of Lord Herbert, as leaning pensively over the waves that washed the African coast, the two friends dropped silently descending tears to the memory of the British shores.

Preparations for landing soon recalled their wandering fancies, and Lady Kinross and Erina, attended by de Briançon and their attendants, with packages for a month's abode at the Cape landed, in excellent health and high spirits, on the romantic and fertile territory of the Dutch colony in Africa.

A neat house on the beach kept for the reception of visitors, whom business or curiosity call to that quarter of the globe, offered agreeable accommodation to the voyagers assembled there to commence their journey on the morrow to Cape-town, about twenty miles distant; and which on account of the ruggedness of the road thither, and the lateness of the day, with a deficiency of travelling conveniencies, could not be undertaken that evening.

The Viscount de Briançon's companions being joined by Madame d'Evreul and the count de l'Armencour, dinner was pepared for the party; and, after a repast in the Dutch manner, their little company, tempted abroad by the serenity of the afternoon, strolled about the place. A small garden belonging to the house of accommodation, presented but few agreeable walks, and soon weary of confinement within its narrow inclosure, the two fair friends, arm in arm, proceeded towards the sea-shore. As they stood attentively watching the marine view, and fixed their eyes upon the vessel decorated by the British ensign playing in the breeze, they perceived a long-boat rowing from that ship towards the land. Desirous of seeing the crew, which seemed to be numerous, they advanced towards the spot of debarkation to take a

near view of the interesting group of their countrymen; for as such, on the coast of Africa, any inhabitant of the British dominions would have been regarded both by the feeling heart of Rosaline and the enthusiatic soul of the effectionate Erina.

As the boat drew near shore the sound of the mariners' voices came on the gale, and the laugh of mirth, with the tone of English speeches, vibrated joyfully on the ears of the attentive listeners, whose spirits, ever gay, were now exhilarated to new pleasure at the sight of the jovial crew, who sung merrily as they rowed to land. As they approached, Rosaline and Erina believed they saw in the faces of the honest British tars, the smiles of long absent friends and brethren for the sailors, like all the English sons of Neptune, carried good humour and generosity in their countenance; and their manners, characteristic of bravery, tempered by the softest humanity, while their rough features spoke perfect contentment and happiness in the hardships of long voyages, tempests, and sea warfare, in the service of their king and country, brought smiles of sweetest complacency on the beauteous lips of Rosaline and her friend; into whose eyes tears of gratitude and tender regard now started, as at one view they beheld the honest

mariners, to whose toils and dangers England is so highly indebted, and a party of British soldiers conducted to foreign shores; brothers in peril and exile for the advantage of their native land, for the safety of their fellow-citizens, and for the preservation of their commerce. The mingled group of tars and military men, alike the brave defenders of their country and monarch, were beheld with those mixed and powerful emotions a feeling mind alone can experience in a situation similar to that of the two lovely females, who, on the coast of Africa, felt themselves, not only aliens, but far removed, perhaps for life, from every relative tie, from every acquaintance of their past years. Rosaline and Erina, connected by the friendship of a twelvemonth, now in their early youth, were every thing to each other in a foreign land, distant from their country, and bereaved of every bond, except those recently formed by choice instead of nature.

Happy in hearing their own language, they looked with delight on the British sailors and the soldiers, whom they now discovered to be Highlanders by their dress. Rising as they approached the shore, they made way for their leader; who sprung to the beach at a bound that displayed at once the most graceful agility, and the superior elegance of form and air, in which perfect symmetry of figure

was united to beauty of features, and an aspect of dignified command was blended with the utmost sweetness of countenance and softness of manner. His stature, above the common size, was set off to the best advantage by a military habit resembling that of his followers. A cloak of tartan plaid hung pendant over his shoulders like a scarf, giving a picturesque appearance to his fine figure; buskins and the Caledonian kilt, shewed the exquisite symmetry of his limbs, and a high-plumed Scotch bonnet, shading a face illumined with intelligence and spirit, and glowing with the freshest bloom of youth and health, rendered him one of the most interesting objects either of the ladies had ever seen. The firmness and lightness of his steps, and the graceful movements of his airy, elegant, and military figure, as he marshalled his men on their landing, by the motion of his sword, and the tones of his voice, at once sweet and manly, rivetted the admiring gaze of Erina, while he interested the heart of Rosaline as the handsomest Highlander she had ever beheld. Although English by birth, Lady Kinross was a Caledonian in spirit as well as by descent; and notwithsanding her residence in Scotland had been short, she had imbibed for it an affection such as is natural to a youthful feeling and elevated mind to cherish for the country of a beloved and noble ancestry. With a lively

sensation of national exultation and regard, she looked at the youth, whose eyes fixed on her, marked that he was equally moved by her appearance. After a gaze of some moments, each starting to a recollection of transgressing civility in thus staring at an entire stranger with rivetted attention, coloured as if by sympathy. The young officer turned from Rosaline to speak to his soldiers, while she, with confuson and some regret, walked hastily away, leaving Erina rooted to the spot where the officer stood. His men being now all disembarked, were directed by an attendant at the water-side, to the house where Lady Kinross and her party had dined and taken up their lodging for the night; and as Erina tripped towards Rosaline, and linking her arm, reached the inclosure of their abode, the youth, stationing his soldiers there, passed into the dwelling, with a profound bow to each of the ladies; whom, by their appearance, he recognized as his fair countrywomen; and a smile of mutual acknowledgment, as inhabitants of the British empire, was joyfully exchanged with a most gracious, reciprocal salutation.

The evening now closed in; and in order that they might secure the only carriage at the place for their journey on the following day to Cape-Town, the count and de Briançon went to arrange

matters relative to it; leaving the three ladies to entertain themselves in conversing about the handsome young officer. He interested Erina as a brother, because she was the daughter and sister of a soldier. Rosaline was charmed with the stranger, and almost loved him as an old friend, because he wore the habit of a country she regarded as her own; and Madame d'Evreul admired him as the handsomest youth she had ever seen. Each was speaking of him with enthusiasm when the two gentlemen entered the room, and joined in pressing the ladies to accompany them for half an hour's amusement to the novel and pleasing scene they had just quitted.

"If you like a picture of life," said the lively viscount, laughing, and presenting his arm to Lady Kinross and her friend, "you may now see it in great variety, if you will permit me to lead you to the kitchen."

"I should like to see every thing in our voyages and travels," said Rosaline, smiling; "so pray come, my dear Erina."

"Most willingly," cried the vivacious girl—"suppose we write a journal of our tour, and publish the incidents which occur in it?"

The count, with a gallant air, presented his hand to Madame d'Evreul to lead her to the proposed station of observation, assuring her, that although he had not the honour of conducting her to the court of Versailles, nor to the grand opera at Paris, he hoped and believed madame would be very well entertained for a short time in seeing manners and places not more inferior than opposite to the superb palace of their *grand monarque*, and the magnificent theatre of their great and elegant metropolis.

The ladies were now conducted into an out-building adjoining the house, whre they beheld a scene that might have afforded the humorous pencil of Brower or Teniers and admirable subject for the happiest exertion of their genius. In a large apartment, representing the interior of a Dutch cottage, were assembled a number of people of both sexes, in various picturesque dresses. Some of the men and women, in the rustic habit of Flemish boors, contrasted agreeably with the appearance of those who were not natives of the place—these like Hollanders, in manners, as in language, were variously occupied: the females were busied in a variety of culinary preparations; the men, ranged on benches, were smoking their pipes in different attitudes of indolence, looking over

a party playing at cards on the head of a cask. Near the fire, seated on stools round a rough table, about half a dozen British tars, in sailor's dress of blue jackets and trowsers, and check shirts tied round their necks, passed flowing cans of grog to the health of their messmates, wives, and sweethearts, and applauded the song, that related in sea-phrases, the perils, pleasures, changes, and employments of the mariner's life. On the other side, a group of the Highland soldiers stood in merry parley in the Scottish dialect, while others of their party footed a brisk reel to the discordant notes of the bagpipe. The variety of sounds, and diversity of the scene, amused the gay Parisians, and deeply interested as it highly entertained Rosaline and Erina. Madame d'Evreul and her beau, the count, laughed heartily, chattered their remarks in French volubility, and shrugged their shoulders on drawing comparisons between the present surrounding objects and those to which they had been accustomed in Paris, much to the advantage of the latter. With the smile of pleasure this sight inspired, Lady Kinross and her friend dropped a silent tear to the remembrance of former times, which the British soldiers and sailors brought, in strong colours, to their fancy. De Briançon, ever gay and equally attentive to his two *belles protégées*,, as he called Rosaline and Erina, lamented

to them their want of a good violin, as he died to dance a cotillon; and perceiving tears glistening in their eyes, he proposed a dance, and requested them to join in the reel with him. Although the hearts of Lady Kinross and her friend were softened by the scene, it had given a lightness to their youthful spirits, and both of them being extremely fond of dancing, and of the Scottish measure in particular, they readily assented to the innocent frolic proposed by de Briançon; and, permitting him to lead them amongst the dancers, the lively trio began the Caledonian mazes. Lady Kinross was quite an adept in every step of what she called her national dance; Erina was not less perfect in the graceful performance of its various movements; and the viscount, by nature and tuition an excellent dancer, kept up the reel with all the vivacity of a young Frenchman, to the great amusement of the whole assembly; which was now graced by the unexpected entrance of the young officer.

On perceiving him the dancers stopped. He seemed agreeably surprised at the sight of the genteel party, and taking off his bonnet, saluted them with inimitable grace. The Parisians bowed to him with courteous affability; the sprightly Erina smiled, and courtesied with inchanting ease,

combined with maiden modesty; while Rosaline, rather confused at being found by her elegant countryman in a Dutch kitchen mingling in the mirthful entertainment of a class in society which pride might deem it indecorous for a female of her station to mix with, blushed scarlet-deep as the young stranger addressed her to request his presence might be no interruption to the entertainment that would so charmingly beguile their evening in the exile from their country, and in the privation of elegant society and amusement, more adapted to the refinement of her taste.

While a crimson tide rushed to the cheeks of Rosaline, she told the young stranger that she admired the liberality of his sentiments, which deemed the desert situation a sufficient excuse for a cheerful frolic, to which she had been induced to consent to oblige and amuse companions, whose youth and gaiety must apologize for what might appear an impropriety to graver characters. "The vivacity natural to this French gentleman," said Rosaline, playfully pointing to de Briançon, as she addressed the officer, "will plead his excuse for having solicited my companion and me to join in an amusement we have, for some time, been debarred enjoying; and Hibernian gaiety and extreme youth will acquit my friend of committing any im-

propriety in acceding, with her usual sweetness of temper, to gratify our obliging beau, and please me in making one in the Caledonian dance, which she knows my affection for Scotland, and a national spirit, render extremely agreeable to me."

The polite officer taking this, as it was intended, for a compliment of courtesy to his habit, bowed his acknowledgment of the fair stranger's civility. In order to prove this approbation of innocent merriment, and to shew his desire of contributing to the amusement of the circle, and seize a favourable opportunity of paying the homage of gallantry to his beautiful country-women, and improve the acquaintance he had been eager to form, he solicited the hand of both the charming strangers to join again in a reel, assuring Rosaline that her delightful example confirmed him in his ideas, that *sociality is a moral obligation; to mingle therefore, in harmless sports, and enjoy the pleasures of life, is, consequently, a duty we owe to ourselves, our fellow-creatures, and the beneficent Creator, who desires us to consider and love mankind as brethren.*

CHAP. VIII.

"Virtue, which is ever the care, as it is the delight, of Heaven, meets invariably a recompence justly proportioned to its exertions: that recompence seenred in a crown of celestial glory, not only shines resplendent to human hope through faith in a blessed futurity, gilding the darkest scenes of life with views of eternal bliss; but it frequently awaits us even in temporal felicity, arising often from an unexpected happy result of circumstances; which human judgment, at the time of their occurrence, would deem misfortunes, while the superintending power of Providence directs their consequences to extraordinary blessings. Mankind, therefore, should never call sorrow evil."

ROSALINE sweetly smiled her assent to the amiable stranger's sentiments and wishes, and permitted him to order the bagpipe again to strike up; while with Erina, she once more traced, with lively steps, blithe countenance, light spirits, and the most graceful airy attitudes, the mazes of a second reel; which the young officer danced with

equal elegance and spirit to the admiration of all present. The heat of the place, warmed by a large blazing fire, and crowded by every inhabitant of the house, oppressed Erina so much, she was obliged to rest herself; but Lady Kinross, with all the vivacity of youthful high spirits, increased by the unexpected odd incidents of the evening, and the general hilarity it produced, was too much inspired by joy to feel weary, and continued to trip the reel with such elastic bounds, that her nymph-like figure seemed quite aëreal.

Mynheer Van Graff, the master of the house, his *frow*, and daughter, with the other Dutch characters, could not comprehend how such easy agility could fall to the lot of mortals; the Parisians allowed that the two present dancers emulated Vestris and Guimard admirably. Erina thought that, charmingly as the young officer danced, he was equalled by her elegant friend, who, on this occasion, surpassed her former excellence in the delightful accomplishment, in which she was distinguished by extraordinary pre-eminence; and the Highland soldiers acknowledged unanimously, they had never seen a Scotch lassie foot it neater than their brave captain's bonny partner.

The early hour of supper arriving, and its pre-

parations being finished, it was served, and the dancing terminated.

The young officer, who had been anxious to see his soldiers properly accommodated for the night, which was his reason for visiting the scene of their entertainment, now handed his fair partners to the table of their host, and took his seat between Rosaline and Erina; while Madame d'Evreul was attended by her beau, the count; and the gay de Briançon was engaged in paying the homage of gallantry to the two blooming Dutch girls of the house, who with their parents sat at the board.

The conversation amongst this heterogeneous assembly could not be general. Those who did the honours of the table were too ignorant of French to speak it with fluency, and were, of course, silent, unless they occasionally addressed each other, or the attendants, in Dutch; which being perfectly unintelligible to the rest of the company, they divided themselves into the little separate societies their situations at supper afforded them an opportunity of falling into, without any breach of civility. The count entertained Madame d'Evreul in their own language, as neither could speak any other, on a variety of topics interesting to courtiers and Parisians of fashion; the young

British officer, too diffident to hazard the chance of committing blunders in French conversation, addressed himself to his two fair countrywomen in English; and the volatile de Briançon amused himself with the *naïveté* of the *jeunes Hollandoises*, who spoke French with more ease and readiness than *Mynheer* and his *frow*. Smiles, however, which are the language of good humour in every country, and are therefore universally understood as an expression of benevolence, went round the circle, and every member of it was gay, because each had an ardent wish gratified. The count loved to talk of the pleasures of Paris to an auditor who admired it and himself as much as he did. Madame d'Evreul had her first passion, which was vanity, most agreeably flattered by the particular attentions of so great and fashionable a personage as the Count de l'Armencour. The lively viscount, who was never happier than in gallanting a pretty woman, who to personal attractions added the charms of novelty, and was delighted in pleasing the daughters of his hosts by a little innocent flirtation; the master and mistress of the house and table felt equal gratification in the attention paid to their girls by a handsome gentleman of rank, and the prospects of emolument arising from the visit of their guests. The young officer, who, on being struck by the uncommon beauty of his two lovely

country-women, had ardently desired to enjoy the pleasure of their acquaintance, had his earnest wishes gratified beyond what his most sanguine hopes could have pictured as at all probable; and Rosaline and Erina who had been equally solicitous to know their interesting countryman, enjoyed more of his company than they could have believed possible, without an introduction to his attention, which they fancied very unlikely to happen in a place where he was a temporary sojourner, unknown and unconnected, like themselves. The intercourse between the three Britons, like all English conversation that passes among entire strangers, disclosed not one syllable relative to the situation of any of the party; because each individual, although less reserved than usually is the case on first acquaintance, as they all felt more interested than is common amongst people of their nation, restrained their natural curiosity about each other, considering its disclosure would appear impertinent; and the trio parted without having enquired or learned their respective destination or name.

It was, however, evident to each, that the interview had been productive of reciprocal delight, and that the most favourable impressions had been

mutually received in this short and accidental acquaintance.

Erina, who, as well as Rosaline, had been attentive to each look and gesture of the youth, marked, with unaccountable interest, every glance of his eye, and each motion of his expressive countenance and graceful figure, which, in every varied turn, evinced the keenest sensibility, combined with uncommon sweetness of disposition and softness of manner; while every sentence he uttered displayed, with extreme modesty, a strength of understanding, an extent of elegant information, the most delicately refined taste, and every virtue that adorns the human mind. On separating, the wish of meeting again was mutual, and expressed on all sides with equal sincerity and politeness.

The three ladies retired to one chamber, and whilst preparing for repose, spoke in the highest praise of their new acquaintance. Madame d'Evreul, laughing, congratulated Erina on having found so charming a beau. The lovely girl, superior to affectation or duplicity, although she was too much the child of innocent simplicity to be, like many others of her sex and age, anxious to engage the attention of young men, or to feel admiration of

them for an agreeable exterior, frankly avowed the interest she took in the youth; whose dispositions and apparent virtues, rather than his handsome person, had made the liveliest impression on her fancy. The warm eulogium she bestowed on the Highland officer, inspired her gay Parisian companion with an idea that Erina's heart had been touched by the graces of their new acquaintance. Erina was, indeed, sensible of all his uncommon merits, but the impression they had made was widely different from that Madame d'Evreul imagined. The delicately chaste mind of Rosaline had been awakened to a juster conception of the refined feelings of Erina towards the amiable young officer. The congeniality of soul between her lovely friend and their new acquaintance, had been too striking to remain unnoticed by the kindred spirit of Lady Kinross; in whose mind an idea had been suggested by the occurrences of the evening, that, probably, in their fellow sojourner at the Cape, good fortune might afford Erina a very flattering chance of gaining a most valuable connection for life; and although the loss of her society, the dearest thing to Rosaline's heart, would be to her an irreparable misfortune, her friendship was too heroically enthusiastic to place self-gratification in competition with the felicity of her loved companion: the generous Lady Kinross therefore hoped, rather than

feared, that the evident reciprocal interest awakened by this casual meeting between Erina and the admirable youth, might terminate to their mutual happiness.

In the morning the beat of the drum, and the shrill-toned fife at day-break, awakened the ladies; who, being accustomed to early rising, got up with the sun. The air was peculiarly bright, and nature, in autumnal verdure, smiled all around as Rosaline and Erina seated themselves at their chamber window to see the Highlanders march off to Cape-Town. The military party now increased by the remainder of the company, and a lieutenant and ensign, who had been prevented landing on the preceding afternoon, for want of accommodation at the bay, were drawn up in order to begin their route. The martial appearance of the Highlanders, and the British colours waving, presented a charming sight to the two deeply interested spectators, of a scene that recalled innumerable tender ideas of their earliest youth; and Rosaline and Erina dropped many tears to the remembrance of their departed parents. Smiles, however, quickly succeeded at the view of their new acquaintance, who coming up to his brother officers, paid the most courteous salute to the two friends, which they returned by a graceful motion of their snowy

hands, while the fresh sea-breeze, blowing from the gently agitated waves, in one of the clearest mornings of autumn, made the roses of health bloom on the cheeks of Rosaline and Erina with a glow heightened by youth and pleasure.

The officers gazed at their extraordinary beauty with admiration, and he on whom it had made a deep impression, evinced it by his looks, while he made a parting obeisance that spoke unutterable sentiment.

The vehicle which was to convey Lady Kinross and her party to the place of destination, was an antiquated coach, lined with crimson cut-velvet; this carriage was drawn by six small horses, which proceeded leisurely on their journey. The uncommon roughness of the road made the traveling difficult, but the picturesque wildness of the surrounding scenery as they wound along the shore at the foot of the mountains, afforded many romantic views, which Erina's taste found much amusement in seizing as she slowly passed along. On stopping at the half-way house for some refreshment, they found the Highlanders reposing themselves, and partook a collation of such viands as the solitary habitation afforded, with their new amiable acquaintance and his two brother officers.

They were men of information and polished manners, and might have been thought handsome had they not been judged by a standard of perfection rarely seen.

A waggon with the attendants and packages of the party now joined them; and after some stay at the baiting-place, the numerous cavalcade again set forward on their journey. Although the heavy vehicles proceeded slowly, they left the Highlanders behind them on the road, and reached Cape-Town sufficiently early in the evening to settle themselves agreeably before night in an excellent lodging, to which they had been directed as the best boarding-house in the place. It was a spacious dwelling, in an open, airy situation, built and furnished in the Dutch style. Madame d'Evreul had a pretty apartment adjoining that occupied by Rosaline and Erina, who were inseparable companions. In a large room where the company assembled round a long table at breakfast, dinner, and supper, the gentlewoman who kept the house, made tea and coffee for her newly arrived guests, to whom this refreshment was served in a handsome saloon that opened to a pretty view of the outskirts of the town, and the adjacent country. A row of trees overshadowing the windows, threw an agreeable shade over the apartment, which, fitted

up with uncommon neatness, was adorned with some pictures, and a good piano-forte.

Rosaline was glad to find this instrument in excellent order; and sat down to strike the chords of touching harmony, whilst Erina tuned her harp, and accompanying her friend in dulcet melodies, passed the hours till supper-time in the enjoyment of her favourite amusement, for the delight of which she had risked the transportation of her harp over the rugged road: the instrument having been packed in a secure case, had escaped any damage; and Erina's joy, in finding it in perfect safety, inspired her music with uncommon spirit. Rosaline also played with unusual taste, and at supper was complimented with her sister-musician, by her host and hostess, for extraordinary proficiency in that elegant art.

The proprietors of the house, although natives of the place, had a knowledge of the world from books, and a long intercourse with people of various countries. The wish of rendering their house agreeable, had brought it into such repute, that it was the resort of all the best company who touched at the Cape; in consequence of which the host and his wife had attained a genteel address, with a fluency in the French language, that rendered

them very pleasing companions at table, which was the only time of their association with the boarders.

On the day succeeding their arrival, the party set out after dinner, on a ramble through the town, and strolled into the company's garden, which is the public walk. Having taken a few turns in its shady avenues, they perceived the Highland officer advancing towards them on the elastic step of pleasure; joy beamed on his youthful countenance as he saluted the well remembered company, with a grace which evinced that although they were new acquaintance, he regarded them as old friends: the bow he made to his two lovely country-women had an air of sentiment calculated to inspire it; and the sensibility of Rosaline and Erina suffused their cheeks with a glow, which, in the most delicate language, told the youth they were delighted at the meeting, which his looks declared, he considered most fortunate.

Replacing the high-plumed bonnet, which he had taken off with peculiar elegance as he paid his obeisance, he stationed himself beside Lady Kinross, conversing with her and Erina in English, as they walked supported by de Briançon. The viscount, who understood that language very indif-

ferently, told the young officer soon after he joined them, that as neither liked speaking the other's language, it would be unfair for either to monopolize *les deux belles;* and that it would, therefore, be a just compromise to part their treasure between them. "Retaining this fair hand," said the gay de Briançon, laughing, and seizing the hand of the blooming Erina, which he held under his arm, "I resign the other charming prize to you, Sir," cried he in a tone of pleasantry, presenting the hand of Rosaline to the young officer, who, bowing with lively courtesy, respectfully grasped the gift assigned him, and drawing the fingers of Lady Kinross under his trembling arm, led her forward through the umbrageous walk.

The amiable and lively Rosaline had never felt gayer than at this moment, which unexpectedly afforded her an opportunity of conversing with her new acquaintance, whose superior qualities had inspired her with a desire to know him more intimately. Attentively observant of him as an object who had engaged her own esteem, and deeply interested Erina, Lady Kinross treated the stranger with the sweetest courtesy, to draw him forth to confidence for the purpose of investigating all his sentiments, and if she found his character such as it appeared, to encourage an intimacy, which,

while it developed his ideas and principles, might nurture in him that tender attachment her anxious solicitude for Erina's advantage had flattered her friendship with the hope of having already perceived, excited both in the bosom of the youth, and that of her sweet friend, and which she was convinced would tend to ensure their mutual felicity; for her penetration had discovered they were of congenial minds, and fitted to live inseparable. Animated by an impulse of kindest benevolence towards the agreeable stranger, and warmed with sentiments of tenderest affection for Erina, Rosaline was inspired to uncommon exertion of those powers of charming by her conversation and by those attractive graces of manner which, even in ordinary intercourse, rendered her superlatively lovely and inexpressibly engaging. Her soft azure eyes beamed exquisitely refined sentiment, the vivid blush of youthful pleasure glowed like new-blown roses on her cheek, making the snowy whiteness of her ivory neck and polished forehead more transparently fair, while the zephyrs waved her light, flaxen, glossy ringlets over her clear-veined temples, a smile of enchanting sweetness played on her ruby lips; her mellifluous voice, attuned to the tones of sensibility, sunk into the hearer's heart, awakening its keenest susceptibility, whilst the admiring youth gazed on the angelic form

beside him with wonder equal to his rapture, and listened, as he fancied, to celestial accents in ecstacy.

The youth, charmed by the winning softness of the lively Rosaline, yielded to the confidence that, stealing over his soul, encouraged it to the most perfect unreserve; giving the rein to his taste and the powerful sensations that at the moment usurped his mind, he led the conversation to themes, which unfolded to the observation of his attentive companion the most amiable dispositions, deep intelligence, the correctest judgment, the utmost refinement of soul, united to feelings equally warm and tender. The penetration of Lady Kinross discovered, in the admirable youth, the rare endowments of strong sense combined with extreme diffidence; innumerable talents without the smallest pretension; perfect ease of address joined to unaffected modesty; genius, accomplishments, both mental and personal, united to every attraction of graceful manners and elegance of figure, untinctured with the least share of vanity.

The youth, on his part, whilst scrutinized closely by his fair companion, was not less observant of her, who, with an intention of investigating the character of the stranger, was unconsciously un-

folding all the perfections she was almost ignorant of possessing. Each absorbed in attentive observation of the other, became unmindful of every thing else, whilst drawn irresistibly to that unreserved intercommunication of soul which delighted mutually, as it reciprocally unfolded the heart, expanding it to confidence in itself, and that in which it found congeniality of thought and sentiment.

The Count de l'Armencour was deeply engaged in conferenee with Madame d'Evreul, to whom his attentions were too flattering to permit her to notice the lapse of hours, or interrupt the incense of adulation her vanity was ever eager to receive in the monopoly of the count's gallantry; and he felt too highly gratified by the fascinating flattery of a pretty woman, to relinquish a *téte-à-tête*, most pleasing to his spirit of intrigue, by an observation on the lateness of an hour propitious to his design of insinuating himself into the heart, on which he was practising his seductive arts for the amusement of days that, without this accustomed occupation, would have hung heavily on his hands. The lively de Briançon, ever volatile, invariably good-humoured, and constantly assiduous and agreeable to the sprightly and amiable Erina, laughed and talked the moments away, with the wish of

entertaining her; whilst Rosaline and the young stranger were too deeply engaged in a highly interesting intercourse to mind the flight of time; and the evening shades had already enveloped the party in twilight, ere any of them noticed the approach of night. Its gloom, at length, stealing on the over-arching trees, made Lady Kinross propose their retiring from the garden.

The youth solicited to be allowed the honour of attending his fair companion home, and the favour was granted with as sweet a grace as it had been entreated.

On reaching their abode, Rosaline's agreeable attendant politely took his leave to depart; but as the company unanimously pressed him to honour them by his presence some time longer, politeness and inclination united in inducing him to enter the house, in compliance with the courteous invitations of the whole party.

They found the saloon lighted for their reception, and tea and coffee prepared for their return. When these refreshments had been handed round the circle, their visitor, introducing the subject of music, professed himself a great admirer of that charming art, and requested to be favoured with

some vocal and instrumental harmony; adding, with an insinuating and graceful pleasantry, that he could not resist the temptation of soliciting a treat which the harp, piano-forte, and music-books promised him; and for which the sweet condscension of the *Muses*, he added, smiling and bowing to the ladies, encouraged him to petition.

The amiable Rosaline, ever willing to oblige, and anxious to display the superior talents of her beloved friend, requested her to tune her harp, and favour the company with a lesson, by way of prelude to an Italian song. The lovely Erina, equally desirous as Rosaline to comply with the general wish, and solicitous to have the accomplishments of Lady Kinross admired as they merited, assured her she would prepare her instrument and voice to join her friend's harmony in a duet for the harp and piano-forte, and in an air for two voices. The gentlemen uniting in urging the proposal made by Erina, Rosaline sweetly acceded to it; while both exerted their musical powers to the utmost, not to rival, but to draw forth and set off the talents of the other to the highest advantage: thus inspired by the ardour of purest friendship, instead of experiencing the stimulus of emulation, the lovely musicians exceeded their former excellence on an occasion where interest for the

stranger's gratification, and affection for each other, called into exertion all the bailliancy of their musical execution, and the finest touches of their taste and feeling for harmony; while the youth, in evident ecstasy, hung enraptured on the dulcet union of their instrumental and vocal accords. The animated encomiums which the stranger bestowed on both the fair musicians, was unlike the common-place gallantry men in general pay to objects of their admiration; his was evinced with equal elegance, delicacy, and respect: so that his exalted eulogiums, although uttered with enthusiastic ardour, were stamped with the seal of sincerity, and seemed more the impulse of an energetic open soul, and the natural effusions of a heart endued with keenest sensibility, than the studied dictates of compliment: sentiment, taste, and judgment marked his praises, which gratified the understanding of Rosaline and Erina, whilst the refined deference of his assiduities evinced him to be a man of sense and feeling. His attentions, in consequence of this conviction, made an impression, which the flattery of a frivolous coxcomb could never have effected.

Supper being announced, according to custom, at an early hour, the stranger took a courteous leave of his agreeable entertainers, requesting per-

mission to repeat a visit that had afforded him exquisite delight. The party, with equal ardour, solicited him to honour them by a daily call; to which polite invitation the engaging youth replied, that the attractions of their charming circle would ensure the punctual performance of his homage; adding, that although he considered himself most fortunate in having found such company to console him in an exile from beloved friends and his country, yet he could not refrain regretting extremely, that the chance which had afforded him the happiness of an introduction to such an agreeable society, had prevented his becoming a member of it during their stay at the Cape. The lively viscount who loved social pleasures, and was particularly fond of English company, urged the young officer to become the inmate of their hostess, and increase the enjoyment of their abode, extolling its advantagesto the young officer on his complaining of the uncomfortableness of his lodging. Promising to leave it for a residence in the house of Madame Van der Worf, so highly recommended by de Briançon, their engaging visitor made his obeisance, and departed with a look that convinced the observant Rosaline his thoughts would remain with them until his promised return. She had noticed with pleasure the young officer's eyes rivetted on Erina whilst she touched the harp, and sang to

its accord with an expression of peculiar interest. Lady Kinross, although extremely young, had an acute penetration and a mature judgment; ardent in her affections, even to romantic enthusiasm, her warmth of friendship made her anxiously solicitous for whatever might conduce to the felicity of Erina; and rejoicing in the prospect now opening, that would afford her friend and the youth the best opportunity of developing and proving, by hourly close observation, each other's character, Rosaline's looks had plainly expressed her wish that their new acquaintance should join their society.

Erina, also, felt and appeared desirous of his being domesticated in their circle; unconscious of having attracted his particular attention, she only flattered herself she might awaken in him that esteem she was alone ambitious of obtaining from a person who had impressed her in a lively manner with that sentiment. She was anxious to learn the name of the interesting officer; while Rosaline, who was too delicate and discreet to whisper, even in the ear of her most intimate confidant, suggestions to that might disturb the ease of Erina, was more solicitous to ascertain the situation of the youth, whose uncommonly elegant address, marking him as a perfectly accomplished character, seemed an unquestionable proof that his connections were in

the highest class, and his pretensions equal to the birth and claims of her lovely friend.

Under an expectation of the agreeable stranger repeating his visit, according to invitation, on the following evening, and with a wish of rendering it pleasanter to all parties, the lively and obliging de Briançon conceived a design of surprising their guest with a little *fête*, which would, at once, be an elegant compliment to him, at the same time that it afforded an occasion of paying one to their host and hostess, while it would give an opportunity for that convivial festivity in which his lively disposition delighted. In the prosecution of this intention, he mentioned it at supper to Madame Van der Worf; and on her appearing gratified by the proposal, and perceiving the circle pleased with the idea of his entertainment, the viscount requested his hostess to invite all her friends, whom he understood to be the most respectable inhabitants of the place, and gave orders for a handsome supper, with music for a dance, on the succeeding night.

This little ball being arranged the next day, Rosaline was anxious to deck Erina for an assembly of which friendship was assured its darling object would be the most distinguished ornament.

The pride and affection of Lady Kinross united in rendering her desirous of attiring, to the best advantage, the graces of her lovely companion's person; while Erina, equally solicitous to adorn Rosaline's beauty, requested and obtained permission to be her handmaid that evening, and exerted her incomparable taste to decorate her in the most becoming manner. Simplicity of dress was the style which most pleased Erina, and best suited the beauteous face and form of her friend. A snow-white short muslin robe of softest texture, trimmed with fine lace, and made with elegant plainness, shewed the perfect symmetry of her figure, and accorded admirably with its peculiar lightness; a few ringlets of her shining flaxen hair strayed in airy negligence on her polished neck and forehead, while the rich profusion of her locks, bound in graceful braids and knots, by Erina's fingers, in the Grecian mode, displayed at once the taste of that lovely girl, and the charms it heightened into finished elegance; a loose flowing drapery of sky-blue crape, in the form of a scarf, with silver-tasselled ends, was thrown over her left shoulder, and hung before with inimitable grace below her knee; the other end passing under her right arm in a light low-pendant festoon, was fastened to a girdle of the same colour, and encircling her in tasteful folds, assumed a variety of

picturesque forms at every movement. White shoes, braced like sandals, with bands of celestial-tinted azure, completed a dress equally simple, fanciful, and becoming.

Thus habited for the ball, the sylph-like Rosaline, with her blooming companion, repaired to the saloon as the sun was setting on one of the most brilliant evenings of autumn. The apartment lighted by bright sun-beams, inspired their youthful spirits with gaiety. Madame d'Evreul was yet engaged with the important business of her toilette; Madame Van der Worf was occupied in the arrangement of the supper-table; the count and de Briançon were out on their evening stroll on the public *promenade;* and as the company was not expected till a later hour, Erina flew to her harp, and in the vivacity occasioned by an anticipation of the festive pleasures of that evening, she struck the notes of her favourite dance; while the equally lively Rosaline, inspired by the sprightly air to exhilarated gaiety, tripped light phantastic steps to the measure which the nimble fingers of her friend struck with animated and animating spirit. At her request, Lady Kinross took up her tambourine, and playing an accompaniment to the melody of the harp, performed a succession of fanciful evolutions with an indescribable grace of movement

and an endless variety of attitudes, sometimes expressive of soft, and at other times of the most lively sentiments. The exercise of dancing heightened the bloom upon her cheeks, and increased the lustre of her eyes, while the expression of her vivacious smile, and the contour of her figure, as she lightly bounded, elegantly turned, and swept in airy circles, round the room on agile steps, conveyed an idea of youth and perfect beauty personified in matchless grace.

While the equally admirable musician smiled her praises on the efforts of elegance which her strain inspired, her eyes followed Rosaline's airy motions as, after many repeated mazy windings round her, she moved forward in sweeping circles about the saloon, till she reached the entrance, where she took a station, in an elegant attitude, to repose herself for the continuance of the dance. After Rosaline had stood for some time in fixed attention on Erina's graceful figure bending over her harp, she glanced a look in the antichamber, and was surprised to see the Highland officer seated in attentive observation of something he was delineating. Instantly conjecturing Erina's portrait to to be the subject of his pencil, Rosaline checked an exclamation of astonishment which had nearly escaped her at the unexpected sight of the youth,

on whose elegant figure and graceful attitude she continued to gaze, whilst he was busily employed in drawing. At length, raising his eyes to Rosaline's face, he started on perceiving her observant of him; whilst she, with a playful look and sportive movement, advanced towards him, and accosting him with a gracious salutation, rallied him on being detected as a spy.

The youth, springing forward to greet her in return, smiling, seized the tone of pleasantry in which he was addressed, and replied, in a manner equally witty and polite, paying the most elegant, and at the same time, the most enthusiastic compliments to the fair friends, each of whom he styled the concentration of all the *Muses* and *Graces*. He heightened this poetically playful compliment, by assuring the laughing Rosaline that he spoke not in hyperboles, for it was impossible for language to equal, much less to exaggerate, the expression of the admiration with which he had long gazed unnoticed on the charming musician and dancer; adding, that, as a convincing proof of his assertions, he should produce the sketches he had made of each, which although seized (he continued bowing and deeply colouring,) at a moment of the most exalted inspiration, and pourtrayed from models of more than human perfection,

evinced that mortal powers, even when exerted to the utmost, must fail in the arduous attempt to delineate celestial subjects.

Erina, who had left her instrument to salute their visitor as soon as she perceived him, smiling at his high-flown panegyric, which the gay Rosaline received with a blushing courtesy of sportive irony, requested to be gratified by the sight of a performance from which she was taught to expect such high delight.

The drawing, presented with a profound obeisance to the fair friends, was executed with a degree of correctness and taste, that shewed equally the powers of the artist's genius, and the elegance of the figures, in the delineation of which his masterly pencil had been most successfully employed. The form of Rosaline, extremely like, was exquisitely touched as the principal object in the picture. Erina's figure, equally resembling, and delicately sketched, was traced with less force and minuteness, as it was veiled in the shade of the back-ground, to give full effect to the light, sportive form of Rosaline, which seemed to be springing forward to the eye in an attitude beautifully descriptive of airy motion, that had happily been seized in delineation from the striking graces

of the original, and given with equal spirit and elegance, as they had forcibly been caught by feeling.

The encomiums bestowed by Rosaline and Erina on this specimen of the newly discovered talent of the young officer, marked the union of correct judgment and enthusiastic taste for the art of designing in the fair friends; in answer to whose praises of his performance, the artist declared he should become intolerably vain from their flattering panegyrics, were he not sensible the merits of his work depended on the perfection of his models, and the inspiring powers of the *Muses*, whom he had been favoured in pourtraying, rather than any natural genius.

The easy playfulness with which these little sallies of innocent gallantry were uttered, and the respectful air of unaffected deference that accompanied the accents of enthusiastic adulation, rendered it entertaining and pleasing, rather than impertinent and fulsome; and inspired the lively Rosaline and sprightly Erina with that sportiveness of manner they often employed to mark by delicate raillery, they perfectly comprehended how lightly a female mind should estimate, and how little it should be impressed by the flattery of exaggerated compliments.

The officer, after shewing he could trifle agreeably in a moment of gaiety, resumed the accustomed sentimentally serious tone of conversation more adapted to his character, and entertained his fair companions by innumerable sensible remarks, that unostentatiously displayed the solidity of his understanding, the depth of his information, and the acuteness of his sensibility, touchingly evinced by the mention of his friends and country; from which, he said, motives of duty would exile him to distant regions for many years. Whilst he spoke on this affecting theme, Rosaline heard him heave a deep-drawn sigh, and Erina perceived tears start to his eyes, and tremble in their soft lustre with an expression of warm susceptibility. Their intercourse, from general topics of sentiment, had naturally dropped into personal application on the tender theme of beloved connections; and each party flattered themselves with a hope of learning many particulars relative to the objects of their recent knowledge and eager curiosity, when the bustle of lighting the saloon, the assemblage of the hosts, and the arrival of their guests, terminated all social intercourse and uninterrupted conversation, by ceremonious forms of general courtesy, and the etiquette of diffused attention to a wide circle of strangers; to each of whom Rosaline and Erina, with Madame d'Evreul, the count,

and de Briançon, made the politest compliments, as the entertainers of the numerous company.

On learning that this unexpected entertainment had been made as an agreeable surprise and civility to him, the young officer paid the politest acknowledgments for the courteous favour to the party who had honoured him with such distinction. In order to evince his gratitude for the flattering attention, he alternately solicited, and obtained, the hand of Madame d'Evreul, Rosaline, and Erina, during the evening, which passed in that gaiety and ease an unexpected festivity never fails to inspire.

The residents of the settlement, by frequent intercourse with strangers, had acquired the agreeable, social quality of affability; and, as many of them spoke French, the party at Madame Van der Worf's made a point of particularly addressing in that language all the company with whom they found a possibility of conversing. The young officer, from never having practised a verbal communication in the French language, neither understood it perfectly when spoken, nor could be prevailed on to risk the utterance even of a single sentence, in a tongue he had been accustomed to study only in books. But although thus deprived of mixing in general con-

versation, he mingled in the dance with spirit, and a peculiar elegance, that attracted the admiration of every person present.

Cotillons and country-dances, with an excellent supper, enlivened the company until a late hour; when, at the pressing solicitation of the young officer, Rosaline and Erina performed a reel with him, to the delight of a wide circle, who loudly applauded the beauty and graces of his lovely partners, whilst he was complimented by whispers buzzing round, that extolled his uncommonly handsome countenance and figure, the picturesque habit of his Highland uniform, and the extraordinary elegance of his air and movements. The evening's festivity had inspired the youth with an easy gaiety that displayed his fine features, his graceful form, and his manners to the highest advantage. The lively interest he had excited in Erina's heart at first sight, was now strengthened into a perfect regard; and the exalted esteem Rosaline felt towards him at their first interview, had since increased to such a degree, that she could not now avoid cherishing a real affection for the youth, whom, having proved to be as amiable as he appeared, her friendship wished to fix as the future dearest connection of her beloved friend. The prospect of Erina's happiness, in the probable possession of

all that could render her fate in life most blessed, warmed the lively fancy of Rosaline, and joy irradiated her expressive countenance with that indescribable brightness with which youthful hope and an angelic disposition deck human beauty in celestial charms. While she led down the dance with the engaging stranger, her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed, and a smile of sweetest complacency sat on her ruby lips, while the pearly polish of her teeth, the shining ringlets of her hair, and the elastic steps with which she lightly tripped the mazes of the dance, rendered her enchantingly lovely. She looked the nymph of innocent pleasure, and bloomed a Hebe with the grace and symmetry of beauty's queen, fixing every eye in the room on her charms, that would have been thought matchless, had not Erina's disputed the triumph of applause.

At the conclusion of the ball, the young officer, bowing on the hands of his two partners, took his leave, with a sigh of regret, entreating permission to wait on them the next morning, which was readily granted; whilst the lively de Briançon, tapping him on the shoulder at his departure, said, that the only return their guest could make for a *fête* made in honour of their acquaintance with him, and for the improvement of their increasing

friendship, would be to enliven their sojourn at the Cape, by becoming an inmate of their abode. To which the youth courteously replied, with an engaging smile, that the fascination of their company was too powerful to be resisted, and that as he should certainly find it impossible to exist out of their society, he would undoubtedly endeavour to obtain the privilege of being included in it as a member of their domestic circle, as soon as he could effect it.

As Madame d'Evreul, Rosaline, and Erina were talking over the pleasures of the ball on the morning succeeding it, the entrance of their new acquaintance enlivened the social party round the work-table. The youth had resumed the serious air, which occasionally stole over his fine countenance in an expression of pensive sentiment, and made an impression on every beholder's heart. An unusual soft shade of interesting sensibility was, on this morning, fixed on the handsome features of the young officer, whom, from his appearance, Madame d'Evreul pronounced, in her own mind, to be deeply enamoured of Erina. Into the innocent girl's thoughts no such vain conjecture intruded to contradict a persuasion that he was affected only at his absence from his country, and separation from his friends, which he had feelingly

lamented on the preceding evening. In the strong evidence of the youth's sensibility, Rosaline saw nothing but a susceptibility of heart that had devoted his soul to Erina, and that would soon make him declare himself her lover. The touching softness of his countenance on this morning, the peculiar gentleness of his address, the visible flutter of agitation that oppressed his fluctuating spirits, whilst an alternate flush of colour and affecting paleness spread over his interesting face, indicated to the observant Lady Kinross, that his ill-concealed disquietude was of recent dates, and that he anxiously sought an opportunity to relieve his mind by its disclosure. The marked dejection of their visitor, his frequent abstraction from the conversation, by which the ladies vainly endeavoured to sooth his uneasiness, appeared to spread an infection of sadness round the circle; and as the gay Madame d'Evreul loved not the participation of melancholy, she retired from the company, that all her vivacity could not enliven. Her departure seemed to increase the emotion of the youth, whom the gentle and feeling Rosaline tried to smile into tranquillity. Perceiving her efforts for this purpose not only ineffectual, but that every attempt she made to inspire him with peace and confidence heightened his embarrassment; and remarking also that he frequently cast a glance towards Erina,

indicative of a desire to address a secret to her ear in private, Rosaline left the saloon, and stationed herself at a window in the adjoining antichamber, that looked into a kind of vestibule leading to a flight of steps at the entrance of the house. She had not been many minutes in this place, observing the plants blooming round her, when she heard the approach of footsteps, and looking up, perceived the youth advancing towards her with an air of extreme agitation. In trembling confusion he bowed in silence, and was passing her to descend the steps, when she bid him kindly good morning, and gaily demanded if he would favour their society with his company that evening to walk in the gardens. To this encouraging question the youth, in faltering trepidation, answered, "Heaven only knows if I shall be permitted to repeat my visits!"—He paused, whilst Rosaline, surprised by his abrupt departure, and still more astonished at a reply that seemed to her inexplicable, felt totally at a loss what to say. She therefore, in silence, smiled an adieu, and repeated it twice by kissing and waving her hand to him as he stood on the steps near her, irresolute whether to stay or depart. Conjecturing his wavering purpose from the expression of his speaking countenance, and decking her own in that sweet complacency which tender interest and regard for the unhappy never

fail to encourage them to hope and confidence, the youth yielded to those sentiments; and springing forward, he, trembling, seized, and respectfully bowing on the hand she had, in affectionate benevolence, extended towards him, he pronounced an affecting farewell; adding, with peculiar emphasis, an energetic benediction: then pressing the soft and snowy fingers of the passive hand, yielded to him with an innocent frankness and kind confidence, for which the enthusiastic youth evinced the deepest sense of gratitude, he made a second parting obeisance, aspirated another adieu, made a movement as if to depart, and then stood fixed in an attitude of pensive reflection.

Rosaline gazed on him with mingled emotions of anxiety and tender compassion, that beamed in looks of ineffable sweetness, and called tears of pity into her eyes: as those of the youth caught the soft expression irradiating from their bright azure, his glistened with a ray of transient delight, whilst a faint smile illumined his features; but this evanescent spark of joy was in an instant extinguished by a suffusion of lustrous drops, that, starting to his eyes, added brilliancy to his timid glances, as the varying colour of his cheeks declared the tumult within his breast. To hide an increasing perturbation, he bent forward in a pro-

found salutation; then, resuming his plumy bonnet, he rushed down the steps with precipitation and hastened away; leaving Rosaline immovable, to gaze on his interesting form till his picturesque dress, lost in the indistinctness of distance, no longer was marked to distinguish him from the crowd of Dutch figures amongst whom he mingled as he passed along. Whilst she continued to fix her eyes on the road the departed youth had pursued. Erina approached with a letter, which she presented to her friend. The packet was sealed, but bore not any superscription, and as Rosaline received it, she demanded of the bearer if she were acquainted with the purport of its contents. To this Erina replied in the negative, telling Rosaline that as soon as she had left the room, their visitor drew the letter from his bosom, and solicited her to present it to her charming friend and country-woman, with his earnest entreaty to pardon the unprecedented liberty he had taken of addressing, in an epistolary way, on such a recent acquaintance, a person to whose name he was a stranger; adding, that the urgency which impelled him to take an apparently unwarrantable licence, would, he trusted, sufficiently plead his excuse for daring to seize an opportunity of thus prematurely introducing himself and his situation to notice. That, as this address required a reply, he should take the

liberty of calling on the following morning, with the hope of receiving either a written or verbal answer. Erina added, there was something so affectingly impressive in the stranger's looks, voice, and manner, that she was inspired with the most lively interest for him; and declaring herself anxiously impatient to learn the contents of the packet with which he had confidentially entrusted her, she requested Rosaline to gratify her curiosity by shewing her the signature. "I have been dying," continued the lively girl, "to learn the name of our new acquaintance. From his appearance, air, and address, I have conjectured him to be a person of high rank. I was frequently tempted," she added, laughing, "to address him by some appellation of dignity; and several times I have been strongly induced to demand his name, although I was apprehensive I should incur the imputation of impertinent curiosity, and confirm the stigma already thrown upon our sex by the other, of being notoriously inquisitive."

During this playful speech of her sprightly companion, Rosaline, with scarcely less eagerness than her friend had expressed, began to break the seal of a packet, which she guessed the engaging and delicate youth's timidity had addressed to her, in order to engage her friendship for himself, and her

affection towards Erina, to plead a tender suit he was too diffident to urge until he was licensed to declare his passion to its object, by the permission of her friends, and a hope that she might be induced to listen to the offer of his hand and fortune.

Whilst this conjecture increased her high estimation of the young stranger, in confirming, by an unequivocal proof, that he professed all those refined and elevated sentiments and qualities her attentive observation of him, from the first moment of his introduction to her notice, his appearance and behaviour decidedly indicated, she carefully, yet hastily, unsealed the packet, and, unfolding it, read, at the end of a long letter, the signature of "Frederic Wilmot!"

"My brother's best beloved and estimable bosom friend!" ejaculated the astonished Erina, in an accent of mingled surprise and ecstasy, clapping her hands with the liveliest expression of joy, and fixing her laughter-beaming eyes on the rapturous smile of Rosaline; who, in a tone of delighted and delighting affirmation, again perused and repeated the well-known valued name of Frederic Wilmot, which had so frequently been recollected and mentioned by the two friends with

indescribable sentiments of the most enthusiastically exalted esteem, the highest admiration, and even with the warmest feelings of tender, yet refined affection.

Erina, whose bosom now glowed with the combination of those sensations, whilst her cheeks bloomed with the increased brilliancy from the liveliest emotion of pleasure, exclaimed, with the energy of sensibility that characterized her, "Amiable and valued youth! beloved by us ere personally known, and admired, even unknown, from the first instant of our introduction. Surely we must deem it an incident ordained by Providence, rather than a casual event of blind chance, that has thrown us together in our respective exile for mutual consolation and happiness!"

"If we admit the superintendance of a Supreme governing Power," replied Rosaline, "it does not appear to me consistent to deny his direction of events; which, frequently appearing to be the sport of insignificant accident, and of little importance, have the strongest influence on our life, and produce consequences in its course even to its remotest duration. I consider every circumstance occurring to mortals, as originating in the divine will, or disposal of his creatures. This

does not, in my opinion, contradict their power of free election and agency which is necessary to constitute their responsibility respecting their conduct; we must be sensible we have not the smallest controul over events, since the human mind can neither take measures to prevent them, nor can our clearest understanding foresee incidents, which we must therefore attribute to Providence, while every one must feel the liberty to think and act in every possible occurrence, with that perfect freedom which renders them accountable for their judgment and actions."

"Sweet moralizing friend!" cried Erina, in playful gaiety, encircling Rosaline's waist with one arm, whilst, with the other hand, she gently seized the letter, declaring she would read it; and insist on her able auditor making notes and comments on the contents of an epistle, which she was certain, must furnish texts in confirmation of the opinion she had just heard treated in a manner, that accorded with her own ideas respecting the Divine interposition in the affairs of mortals.

Rosaline smiled at this little sally of her sportive companion's exhilarated spirits. As she marked the heightened bloom of pleasure on Erina's cheek, saw the increasing and lively sparkling radiance

that youthful joy darted from her fine hazle eyes, while smiles of eager delight dimpled round her mouth, Lady Kinross felt a sensation of pure rupture, such as angelic spirits experience in witnessing the beatitude of sainted souls. Her enthusiastic mind and lively imagination represented to her fancy, at one glance, the felicity of her beloved Erina, secured by her fortunate meeting with the amiable Wilmot, whilst their united bliss would ensure the happiness of Charles O'Brien, by giving to his bosom friend the additionally endearing tie of fraternal bonds to cement those of amity; and by thus leaving his heart at perfect liberty to offer his ardent vows where she was assured they would be acceptable; for she had long suspected, and was now convinced, that Seraphina's susceptible soul would never have remained insensible to the suitor proposed by her father, Lord Herbert, and so highly favoured by his regard, had not her affections been fixed on Erina's brother.

Flattering her friendship for all parties with the pleasing idea of having been instrumental to the perfect happiness she anticipated would soon be in the possession of the objects of her tenderest affection, the heavenly soul of Rosaline thrilled with ecstatic joy.

Smiling like an angel, from the inspiration of the most virtuous sentiments, Rosaline kissed Erina's glowing cheek; while a tear, warm from friendship's pure source, dropped from the eye of Lady Kinross on the bosom of her friend, whom she requested to peruse Wilmot's letter, saying, she was assured it would lead to the fortunate termination of events that had occasioned much pain and severe trials both to O'Brien and Wilmot, whose virtues would undoubtedly not fail to obtain ultimately that high reward they merited.—"*Virtue*," said Rosaline, as Erina was preparing to read the letter, "*which is ever the care, as it is the delight of Heaven, meets invariably a recompence justly proportioned to its exertions; that recompence, secured in a crown of celestial glory, not only shines resplendent to human hope through faith in a blessed futurity, gilding the darkest scenes of life with the views of eternal bliss, but it frequently awaits us even in temporal felicity, arising often from the unexpected happy result of circumstances, which human judgment, at the time of their occurrence, would deem misfortunes, while the superintending power of Providence directs their consequences to extraordinary blessings. Mankind, therefore, should never call sorrow evil.*"

CHAP. IX.

"The most unhappy can never be destitute of consolation; the most miserable have innumerable comforts; the wretchedest beings have much to live for: all should, therefore, possess contentment even in the cruelest disappointments, since the tree of hope widely spreading, ever springing in eternal verdure, blooms in luxuriant blossoms to human expectation, overshadowing every mortal; while its roots strike firm on earth, its branches shoot to heaven."

WITH such powerful and mingled emotions as a keenly feeling mind alone can imagine to be excited in hearts of the most acutely tender sensibility, did Erina read, and Rosaline listen, to the following letter:

"IGNORANT as I am by what name I ought to address you, I am aware I incur the hazard of being esteemed impertinent, in thus intruding on

your attention. Sensible of the great liberty I dare assume, I shall entrust my apology for this trespass to the intercession of your sweet friend, whom I intend requesting to favour me, by becoming the bearer of this letter. The reliance I have in her kindness, the experience, even a short acquaintance has afforded me of her power over the heart, and my observation of the influence she has in your's, point her out, in my judgment, as the best advocate I could employ to plead my cause at the bar of sentiment, where the compassion of her dearest companion and country-woman will preside to hear my defence, and acquit or condemn me. As the mercy of a British tribunal where the judge is bound to be counsel for the defendant in case he wants an advocate, is pre-eminent and universally acknowledged, I throw myself in entire dependance on the lenity of that court, to the decision of which, I trust my trial, in the hope I shall obtain strict justice.

" Our accidental introduction to each other's acquaintance, in a country where we are alike strangers and equally unknown, and the certainty of our speedy separation, added to a powerful impulse to seize an opportunity, which neglected, may never again occur, urge me to an avowal that would, in any other circumstances, except

those of the strong necessity which prompt it, appear indecorously premature. That avowal is the situation of my heart.

" It is very remote from my intentions, as it is totally opposite to my character, to adopt the common-place adulation of an ordinary lover, to paint the ardour of my passion in complimenting the charms of its object, since those which excited my admiration are as greatly above all praise as my sentiments are superior to description.

" My attachment is too strong, too refined to express itself in language, which, in its best expression, would fail to excite those glowing ideas of ethereal spirit that the soul of sensibility, by sympathy alone, without the aid of words, can learn. Would to Heaven I could venture to entertain a hope that your feelings, at any future period, might become, at my intercession, the expletives of those which devote me to you! The impression I received from you the first hour of our association is indelible. After this confession I must declare, with honest frankness, every particular relative to the situation of the being who would presume to interest you.

" When thrown in my infancy an unprovided

dependant on the world, pity snatched me from the encircling arms of death, in which I lay carelessly smiling as I pressed the dying bosom that sustained me: bequeathed with a last sigh of struggling sorrow a helpless child, to the care of strangers, I was, by their compassion, protected, not as the orphan of unhappiness left destitute, but as the offspring of a noble house, whose fostering kindness supplied to me the loss of parents I never knew.

"Surrounded, from my earliest years, by all the splendour of rank and fortune, and smiled on by friendship and the tenderest affection of invaluable, noble, and most beloved connections, from whose unexampled indulgence I might command wealth and the highest situation, I have chosen to become a soldier of fortune, to have the pleasure of founding my own; not from an impulse of pride that spurns at obligations, but at the suggestions of a spirit of independence, strengthened by notions of justice, which forbid my remaining a weight on the generosity of friends, when conscience tells me it is my duty to owe my rise to rank in an honorable profession to the claims of active service rather than interest, and that every man should merit fortune to enjoy it.

" This conviction would not, perhaps, have lured me from the lap of ease, affluence, elevated society, and the still more seductive pleasures of endearing intercourse with objects to whom every social and moral tie bound me closely, had not principles of delicacy and honour impelled me to exile myself from scenes most beloved, to distant regions, for the sake of beings, to whom my debt of gratitude can never be repaid, even by the sacrifice of my interest and happiness to promote their advantage and felicity.

" In this brief account of myself, I have but slightly sketched the history of my situation; yet I have thrown sufficient light on the incidents which mark my life, to shew you my real position in the world, and to develope my character as well as my circumstances to your knowledge, feeling I owed a true explanation of both to you when I dared to declare myself, not only your enthusiastic admirer, but your devoted adorer.

" Abhorring flattery as much as I detest the smallest concealment of facts and sentiments, which sincerity assures me it requires me to unfold when I would lay open my thoughts and whole heart to your investigation, I feel myself called on to acquaint you, that my soul never received a tender

impression until your angelic qualities taught me the sensation of love. Before I beheld you, that sentiment was known to me only by name. I had experienced a very lively admiration of female beauty, my heart had cherished affection so tender for one object of the most animated esteem, that I believed time and an intimate intercourse with her in the observation of her increasing personal attractions and mental perfections, might have nurtured to fatal maturity a passion virtue interdicted my indulging, although a father's permission sanctioned my addresses. The voice of delicacy suggested timidity; I steeled my fancy against the emotions of tenderness; sentiments of ardent friendship for a beloved companion, who idolized the maid I approved, rendered me more desirous of his felicity than of my own gratification; and I resolved, nay vowed, to relinquish the prize to him. As the human mind is prone to arrogate merit to itself on the slightest grounds, I gave myself some credit for an act that self-love magnified greatly in believing meritorious, until my vanity was checked by a positive conviction, that the sentiment I mistook for love, was no more than that affection sensibility naturally feels for an estimable object, whose amiable qualities a daily intimate intercourse developes to our view.

" Widely different are the sensations the first sight of you inspired, and a short acquaintance has cherished into a passion, that can never end while I live; and which, interwoven with every thought and sentiment of my soul, seems as if, like its essence, it would defy death, and mount to eternity with the vital spark which is for ever to exist. Pure as yourself, whose virtues and innocence gave it birth, my flame is spiritualized as ardent. Tell me then, fair object of my chaste affection, if you will permit me to approach you with that tender homage my heart is eager to offer at the shrine of your perfections. The soft expression of angelic benevolence irradiating from your eyes, glowing in your cheeks, playing in your smiles, and addressing the feelings in your every word and gesture in the language of sensibility, assure me your bosom is its throne. Flattered as I am by the polite attentions your courtesy pays me as a visitor and friend, I dare not hope I meet with higher distinctions from you than esteem and kindness are ready to allow every person who, although a stranger, would be received with testimonies of urbanity, because his being a native of your country gave him claims on your attention as an exile in a foreign land.

"My presumption would endeavour to interest your heart on tenderer motives; I would dare to be ambitious of titles to your regard superior to those of being your countryman, acquaintance, and friend; I would be that enviable being whom your highest partiality distinguished, whom your tenderest affection would honour by permitting him to hope, that length of assiduities, faithful attachment, and frequently repeated proofs of worth, might induce your acceptance of his vows when his situation would enable him to place you in one where the high rank of a soldier, and the laurels his love would inspire him to win in the fields of fame, might render him not beneath your notice; and when martial glory would supersede the necessity of wealth, to make us support with economical ease that elegant independence your charms and endowments must render a sphere of distinguished brilliance. In all but the attainment of your regard I bound my wishes to moderation.

"Let me in pity speedily learn my doom—a gentle encouragement to hope your favour is all my short acquaintance and casual introduction, can claim from your kindest indulgence and prudence; and therefore mine will not venture to ask,

as it ought not to demand, a higher present honour than to be permitted to prove myself

" Your ever devoted, faithful servant,

" FREDERIC WILMOT."

The strong and mingled emotions the perusal of this address excited in the bosom of Rosaline and Erina, kept both for some moments absorbed in a train of reflection which rendered each silent.

Rosaline saw the destruction of her fancy-built fabric of hope and joy; instead of Wilmot's felicity, in which she with the rest of his friends would have participated, her fancy drew the liveliest sketch of his disappointment, on learning that his affections were placed on an object, who, instead of returning them, must endeavour to forget him, as duty dictated that task to both. As the necessity that imposed this obligation passed in review, she could not avoid regretting, that fate, which had prevented their meeting before she had entered into those bonds that absolutely interdicted their thinking of each other, had not still kept them from a meeting productive of infinite pain to herself, as well as to an unfortunate

lover, whose situation she lamented as she did her own. The admiration she had cherished for the character of Wilmot before her connection with de Briançon, and which had in a great measure tended to render her averse from forming it, recurred now with increased force when a personal intimate acquaintance with the interesting youth, whom even unkown she had regarded, brought all the perfections he possessed to her view in a manner, and through a train of incidents and circumstances, calculated to make the deepest impression on her tenderest feelings. The place and moment of her first interview with him, when on the wild and romantic coast of Africa, her heart warmly welcomed him on shore as a countryman; their subsequent meeting in a scene where every thing tended to awaken in the liveliest manner her interest for the engaging stranger; her next unexpected and delightful intercourse with him as the companion of a charming walk through embowering groves overshadowed by the twilight of an autumnal evening, when her bosom expanded to confidence and sentiment; his repeated visits; his assiduities on the night of the ball; the sketch he made that evening, which, whilst it displayed his taste, marked the impression his heart had received; and the present declaration that evinced it in the most flattering manner, throwing a new

and strong light on well remembered looks and expressions, which at the time of their occurrence had been interpreted as demonstrations of a growing passion for Erina, but of which Rosaline now unexpectedly discovered herself to be the object; all these retrospections united with full force to excite a powerful interest for that youth, whom her warm fancy had long innocently represented as the only being on earth who could afford her that felicity requisite to the endurance of an engagement for life. That being her imagination had decked in personal attractions equal to the perfection of his character, now proved himself to be both in exterior and mind superior, if possible, to the ideas she had conceived; that being, surpassing human excellence in her enthusiastic opinion, had selected her from two of the most lovely and engaging of her sex; he had preferred her before the fascinatingly charming Seraphina, the superlatively beautiful Erina; ignorant of her rank and fortune, the soul of Wilmot had devoted itself for ever to her with that degree of pure yet ardent love, which Rosaline had until that moment believed too refined to exist in the human breast, and which she had consequently imagined to be the fiction of romance. "Would to Heaven," she sighed, "I could still think my ideas of mutual irresistible attraction nothing but an illusive dream

of enthusiasm, and romantic affection, merely a flight of poetic fancy, to render the pages of a fictitious tale interesting while it is judged improbable!"

Such was the train of Rosaline's silent musings, whilst Erina, fixing an eye of penetrating observation on the expressive countenance of her distressed friend, mutely perused the perturbation of her mind in the varying colour of her cheeks, the humid lustre of her eyes, the dejection plainly denoted in every feature, and the tremulous motion of her heaving bosom, which, in tumultuous palpitations, throbbed the agony of her heart. Tears of sympathy stealing empearled over the flush of agitation on Erina's cheeks, dropped in silent quick succession on the traces of Wilmot's pen, as she continued to bend over the lines expressive of his sentiments and virtues. From the repeated strong evidences of his sensibility, and the acuteness of her own, she too well knew the agonizing sensations which must rend his soul on the shock of learning, that virtue forbid his passion for its lovely object, whom religious obligations had indissolubly bound in a connection with another. While she wept the cruel disappointment of a youth endeared to her, not only by a thorough knowledge of his perfections, but also from innumerable causes,

which must excite the tenderest interest in a soul enthusiastically warm and acutely feeling as her's was both by nature and education, she heaved a deep sigh at the reflection of Rosaline's situation, which the whole expression of her countenance and figure eloquently explained to the keen sensibility of Erina. The late confession her friend had made of the strong predilection she entertained in Wilmot's favour, the avowal of her romantic notions on the subject of matrimony, which, an idea of the impossibility of their being realized, had decided her to resolve against forming a connection that must end in disappointment and unhappiness; the animated praises Rosaline had bestowed on the youth, even when she was a stranger to his name; and the evidently violent emotion occasioned by its discovery with the declaration that his whole soul was eternally devoted to her; all these retrospections rendered it easy for the feeling heart of Erina to divine the present state of the gentle Rosaline's. Although Erina's had never yet received a tender impression, the energy of her mind represented to her fancy a lively notion of enthusiastic affection for an object worthy of inspiring it; and the animated interest she felt for the admirable Wilmot, and amiable Rosaline, rendered Erina keenly sensible to their sorrows, that must be the inevitable consequences

of an agonizing disappointment in the tenderest sentiment; a disappointment which Erina feared and believed would infallibly throw a deep shade of misery over the life of each to its latest hour. A sensation of anguish, more poignant, if possible, than that she imagined they must feel, tore her heart on the dreadful reflection of having been, with her brother, the joint cause of Wilmot's and Rosaline's wretchedness. "Alas!" sighed Erina, absorbed in silent and almost distracting musing, "the amiable Wilmot, exiled by delicacy of feeling, by the enthusiatic exaltation of his friendship for my brother, is doomed to suffer through my means more than banishment from his home, and the beloved ties of his nearest connection; more than the dangers of unfavourable climates, and all the direful calamities and perils of war on the plains of Asia; whose vindictive sons inflict on their enemies, whom the chance of battle place within their power, cruelties equal to those the sanguinary tiger makes his victims feel! Wilmot's regard for my brother subjects the nobly generous youth to the probability of those risks, and the sufferings which Rosaline's friendship for me exposes him to endure, till the last moment of his existence. Dreadful indeed is the fate we occasion, and consequently experience! Alas! my unhappy brother, thou, like thy unfortunate sister, art

doomed to cause the misery of that bosom friend to whom innumerable ties of obligation and affection bind thee! Thou, like Erina, art destined to be the despoiler of the felicity of those loved companions, who have sacrificed their dearest interests for thy advantage and happiness!"

Such were the melancholy meditations of the afflicted friend of Rosaline, when the latter thus addressed her in a voice and manner wherein the utmost softness of sensibility was united to that strong expression of fortitude, which a well-regulated mind can never fail to obtain by the aid and support of religion; which, in every misfortune, will afford resignation sufficient to sustain the heaviest burthen of woe; which in all apparent evils will trust in Providence for ultimate benefits resulting from them to ourselves or others; and which will ever whisper to the christian soul, that temporal sorrow bears the same proportion to everlasting bliss, as an instant on its comparison with the duration of eternity: when considered with a reference to each other, human temporary affliction borne with patient submission, is as nothing on consideration of the infinite reward attending it in an immortal state of beatitude. Impressed with this consolatory conviction, the gentle Rosaline, sweetly smiling the accustomed

serenity of her mind, which the surprise of Wilmot's touching letter for some moments had disturbed, but which the energy of her virtuous dispositions enabled her regaining, thus spoke: "As prudence, equally with propriety, forbids my replying either verbally or by letter to an address, I should find it both most aukward and distressing to answer in any mode, I must delegate to your delicacy, feeling, and judgment, a task I am assured your friendship, my dear Erina, will not refuse me the favour of undertaking, however painful it may be to your sensibility to wound that of a person you highly regard for a variety of reasons. The several motives, that not only authorize your esteem for Wilmot, but claim it as justly due to him, because he is your brother's bosom friend, must render him so interesting to you, that it will be unnecessary for me to caution you against exciting those tender sentiments in Wilmot's heart it will be your duty to suppress. What I owe myself, and the author of this address, interdicts all farther intercourse of any kind between us. My engagement to de Briançon render it highly indecorous for me to see one who declared himself my lover, although his entire ignorance of my connection justifies him of impropriety, or an intention of insulting me, by a proposal to which I am neither at liberty to listen nor reply either

directly or indirectly: for this reason I cannot hold any future communication with Wilmot, even through the channel of a message by our mutual friend; for every principle would condemn my addressing him in any language, since that of displeasure would be unjust, because he is guiltless of offence; the voice of pity would be not only indelicate for me to use, but improper for him to hear, as it might cherish a tenderness it is his duty and mine to subdue. To your judgment, therefore, my dear Erina, I commit the office of acquainting Wilmot with my situation, that interdicts our future association, or shortest interview; and to your care I also consign the strict concealment of this aukward and unfortunate circumstance, which, for the sake of every person whom it concerns, we must not only carefully conceal, but endeavour to bury in oblivion."

This commission Erina tacitly assented to undertake and perform with the utmost delicacy, secrecy, and friendship, by silently kissing the cheek of Rosaline; who immediately changed the conversation to lively subjects, in order to dispel the melancholy depicted in the countenance of her friend, and dissipate her own dejection; persuaded that success in every undertaking will be exactly proportioned to exertion, and that it is a duty

owing to ourselves, our associates, and religion, to endure with fortitude the painful occurrences of life, intended as trials of virtue; and persuaded, also, that grief may frequently be alleviated by an effort to appear cheerful; and that, on the contrary, an indulgence of sorrow will increase it. Rosaline's endeavours to regain her usual vivacity proved so successful, that Erina became more tranquillized on her friend's account, while the appointed interview with Wilmot was anticipated with dread.

Taking her seat on the following morning at the window of the saloon, she waited his coming, and her heart palpitated on seeing him approach the house. As he mounted the steps under the window, he looked up and bowed to Erina, who welcomed him with a soft smile, while a tear of pity started to her eye as she marked the strong emotions of mingled hope and fear evident in his fine countenance: her high esteem for his noble character, her tender compassion for his situation, would have ensured him the liveliest sympathy in the heart of Erina, even had he been a stranger; the touching remembrance of his having been the associate in her father's dangers and glory, and that the youth, who had been the favourite companion in arms of her departed parent, had received his last sigh, watched with protecting care over his last moments,

and wept over his grave as a son, endeared him to her as a brother; while the recollection of his generous friendship for her's, and the interest she felt for him as the deeply enamoured and unfortunate lover of Rosaline, increased the sentiments of attachment to Wilmot, whom she hastened towards the entrance of the saloon to meet with a salutation of sisterly affection.

The youth took her offered hand, and bowed upon it in silence, while Erina accosted him by his name, and telling him she had long had the honour and pleasure of knowing him in Europe, introduced herself to the surprised and delighted Wilmot under the interesting title of O'Brien's sister. This unexpected, and apparently fortunate, discovery inspired Wilmot with more hope of being an accepted lover than he had ventured to flatter himself likely on so recent an acquaintance, and such an introduction to the unknown object of his choice; he felt assured, from the mode of Erina's address, that her brother's friendship would be a powerful recommendation, not only to her's, but to the favour of her lovely friend; and a fluttering sensation of joy irradiated his countenance with a smile expressive of hope and happiness, while his varying colour painted all the emotions that can assail the heart of an ardent timid lover waiting in

fluctuating dread, and alternate pleasing and painful expectation, the sentence on which hangs in anxious suspense the happiness or misery of his fate.

As Erina marked the tumult of his feelings, she requested him to take a seat beside her on the sofa, which he did while with an easy grace he threw aside his rich plumed bonnet, and modestly solicited to learn the name of her charming friend. On hearing that she had the rank of countess in her own right as the heiress of an ancient house of illustrious descent from the throne of Scotland, and bore the title acquired as the reward and distinction of naval valour by ancestors, whose fame was recorded in highest commendation in the annals of British glory; Wilmot turned pale, trembled, and faltering, told Erina he had been even more daringly presumptuous than he had imagined in addressing her friend. "The appearance and manners of Lady Kinross," said the youth deeply blushing, "carried convincing evidence that her birth, education, and mind, were elevated above my pretensions, though I had no suspicion that an exalted title, and the possession of wealth, placed her so high, and superior to one who is only arrived at the rank of a captain, and whose fortune consists only in an elegant dependance on a noble and generous friend and patron, with

the expectation of rising by the sword to a genteel independance in an honourable profession with the acquisition of a soldier's highest dignity and glory." —" I should not have presumed," continued Wilmot sighing, " to have offered the homage of enthusiastic admiration, and the ardent vows of an honest heart to the object of its eternal adoration, had I known the distance rank and riches placed Lady Kinross beyond my hopes."—— Wilmot paused; Erina, at a loss what to say, did not interrupt the silence; her evident embarrassment disconcerted the timid lover still more. He endeavoured to speak several times, but agitation kept him mute; at length, in a low voice, he ventured to demand if his fair companion had conferred on him the obligation he had solicited, and honoured him by being the bearer of his address. To this question Erina replied by an assenting bow, and with some hesitation Wilmot requested to know if she were the messenger of any reply to his letter.

" I have not the office of a messenger to fulfil," answered Erina, " because I must merely be the expositor of my friend's situation, which prevents the necessity of her answering in any manner the address you did me the honour of intrusting to my care; that circumstance rendered me the confidant

of its purport, and empowered me with a commission which is equally aukward to me to execute, as it will be painful to your feelings to learn."—— The gentle Erina stopped, and trembled as she marked the increasing agitation of Wilmot's soul; she knew its sensibility, and wept while he hastily rose and paced the saloon with steps that indicated his perturbation to be extreme. After traversing the apartment several times, he approached Erina, whose soft pity extended her hand to the commiserated youth. This token of affectionate esteem touched his warmly feeling heart; the sister of his friend seemed to him as his own, and with a fraternal sentiment he grasped and pressed Erina's hands; their respective situation, relative to each other and their common friends, gave them both that confidence and freedom which can scarcely subsist between two youthful beings of different sex, unless there be a mutual understanding that assures them their reciprocal attentions in the demonstration of pure friendship can neither originate from, nor be on either side, mistaken for a more ardent sentiment. With such an assurance did Wilmot hold, and Erina yield, the hand he passionately pressed, while she thus addressed him as he stood before her. "Let me entreat you, Captain Wilmot, to summon that fortitude and self-command which so eminently

distinguish your character."——She paused—he bowed, and with a faint smile, strongly indicative of despair, requested her to proceed, as he was prepared for the worst. "Rejection, displeasure, even contempt," cried Wilmot in a deep tone of agony, "I expect to meet for my presumption."—"It would be impossible," said Erina, kindling to a deep glow as she spoke, "to move the angelic soul of Rosaline to asperity; she is all mildness, delicacy of sentiment, and benevolence towards all mankind; and you, who are, and have been so long an object of her esteem, ought not to judge her so harshly."——The gasping Wilmot, bewildered by all he had heard, coloured crimson while the mild beams of his eyes glistened in tears with difficulty repressed; "Pardon," he exclaimed interrupting Erina; "Pardon," he reiterated, "my impetuosity; I am sensible, as I ought to be, from lessons of experience, that the bosom of your angelic friend is the throne of every virtue; charity shines in the radiance of her eyes; kindness and refined sensibility mark themselves in celestial expression in her smiles; and the tones of her voice eloquently declare she would pity rather than condemn an offender; but is my trespass excusable in her mild judgment?"

A ray of joyful expectation illumined Wilmot's

countenance, and made Erina feel she had not guarded sufficiently against raising hopes which must be destroyed; and that Rosaline had cautioned her not to excite by a look or word calculated to inspire the sensations she was commissioned to annihilate. Whilst pondering on the most delicate mode of executing her office, Wilmot's eager looks inquired her purpose; and after a moment of eloquent silence, he resumed his seat beside her, and demanded, in trembling agitation, what she had to communicate on the subject of his anxious disquietude.

"I have the painful task of informing you," said Erina in a soft voice of gentle condolence, "that Lady Kinross is the wife of the Viscount de Briançon."

In a tone of surprise and agony, Wilmot repeated the sentence—he clasped his hands, and sat for some instants as if deprived of thought or motion—a death-like paleness spread over his face—an universal tremour agitated his frame—he sighed—then starting from the sofa he struck his forehead, exclaiming, "adieu, beloved sister of my dearest friend! fate no sooner has introduced us to each other's knowledge than her cruel sentence parts us, perhaps, to meet no more; honour tells

me I must never again behold the object I should transgress virtue in seeing, or even in desiring to see. Farewel then, charming companion of her whom delicacy tells me I must fly; whom religion commands me to forget."

Staggering towards the sofa, Wilmot grasped the kindly offered hand of Erina; he pressed it to his forehead and bosom with a wild, yet respectful, energy. As the pitying girl marked the expression of fixed despair traced in the fine countenance of the interesting youth, an impulse of compassion made her gently press her hand on the arm of Wilmot, while she entreated him to calm his agitation.

"Heaven, I trust," he replied with energy, "will aid me with fortitude sufficient to submit with resignation to the trials and disappointments decreed by the will of infinite wisdom. I rejoice at this moment more than ever that I am a soldier; if I have no object to live for, I have glorious ones to die for; my king, my country, duty, and fame!"

A spark of rekindling animation glanced from his eyes, a flush of enthusiasm coloured his cheeks; Erina thought of the approaching dangers he

might rashly rush forward to meet in the field of battle against the restless chiefs of Asia; and shuddering at the prospect of his hapless, perhaps, dreadful fate, she wept at the reflection, that she had not only been the occasion of his present misfortune, which might urge him to desperation and destruction; but that she had been cruelly destined to strike the wound she anticipated would be fatal. Perceiving him affected by her tears, she entreated him to calm his agitation for the sake of his friends; reminding him that *the most unhappy can never be destitute of consolation, the most miserable have innumerable comforts, the wretchedest beings have much to live for. All should, therefore, possess contentment even in the cruellest disappointments, since the tree of hope widely spreading, ever springing in eternal verdure, blooms in luxuriant blossoms to human expectation; overshadowing every mortal, while its roots strike firm on earth, its branches shoot to Heaven.*

CHAP. X.

"The most exquisite enjoyment in this world, consists in making those around us happy; from the conviction that in the fulfilment of social obligations we are performing a religious duty, and that in acts of kindness we can best imitate Him whose life ought to regulate ours; and who, setting us the brightest example of beneficence, taught it as a new and last commandment, as the test of being His disciple, and thereby proved that the favourite attribute of divinity was to dispense happiness in blessing."

WITH a placid countenance, expressive of settled sorrow, Wilmot listened whilst Erina endeavoured to console him; and pressing her hand, which she still permitted him kindly to hold, a faint smile of gratitude passed over his features, and sweetly thanked her for the affectionate solicitude her voice and manner, equally with her words of comfort, conveyed to his susceptible soul. In the moment of his first paroxysm of disappointment and grief, scarcely sensible of

his actions, yet strongly impressed with the necessity of flying the object of his ardent and unfortunate passion, he had snatched up his bonnet, while bidding adieu to Erina, with an intention of instantly quitting the house she inhabited never to return. Tranquillized into his usual self-command and presence of mind, he perceived the rudeness of leaving his kind consoler thus abruptly; he felt the amiable sister of his dearest friend claimed his most courteous attentions, not only from the perfections of her character, but in return for the polite, and even flattering, regard with which she had distinguished him as the esteemed companion of her brother. On all these accounts Erina was interesting to the amiable Wilmot, added to which her being the beloved associate of the charming Lady Kinross, endeared that lovely girl to the acutely feeling heart of Rosaline's lover. Restored now, after the first stunning shock of agonizing disappointment, to a clear view of his situation, he experienced a necessity for the consolation a sympathizing confidant could bestow. An exile from his home—separated from every friend—and banished by duty from the presence of Lady Kinross for ever, from any further intercourse with that object whose society had become not only the delight of his existence, but apparently requisite to it, the unhappy Wilmot thought him-

self forlorn indeed! He was in despair on the view of the melancholy prospect surrounding him; he felt himself, as it were, a solitary pilgrim journeying in sad weariness through strange desert regions, to foreign unknown wilds, to live for tedious years a hermit without any enjoyment to alleviate the sorrows, cares, vexations, and crosses of life. The sister of O'Brien might have supplied to Wilmot the absence of that highly esteemed friend, but cruel fate denied even that consolation to the griefs of the unhappy youth, for how could he associate with Erina without meeting Lady Kinross? Even supposing her delicacy prevented her allowing him a short sight of her when he visited her friend, yet the view of de Briançon, her happy husband, would pierce the sensibility of Wilmot with sharpest daggers of torment. He felt, therefore, it was an obligation, comprehending innumerable indispensible duties, not to revisit Erina. Too soon, alas! he should be compelled by urgent necessity to bid her adieu for ever! Understanding, however, on inquiry, that he might enjoy an hour of her company without interruption, he resumed his seat beside her on the sofa. Independent of the desire he had to evince his esteem for the sister of his bosom friend, Wilmot experienced a great anxiety to learn the reason of her being the companion of the travels of Lady

Kinross. He had heard the casual mention of their destination to India, and he was eager to know whether they were to visit or reside in the part of the country where his professional duty called and stationed him. The idea that they might fix their residence in the vicinity of his, excited a strong emotion of mingled pleasure and pain; for, although he would have experienced a species of satisfaction in living near O'Brien's sister, Wilmot's mind was too well regulated to admit even a condemned wish of being thrown by necessity into the hazard of any future interview with the object he could no longer behold with innocence.

In reply to his interrogations, Erina's candour compelled her to a brief account of her situation; in which she softened, as much as possible, many circumstances the delicacy of her sensibility led her to imagine would too forcibly awaken Wilmot's. With filial reverence she guarded carefully against impressing him with the slightest notion that her mother, or friends, were answerable for the sorrows, sufferings, and risks, which bigotry had inflicted; the nobly generous part her beloved Rosaline had acted in rescuing her from misery by the sacrifice, which evinced superlative energy of virtue and friendship, Erina's prompted her to

explain. In the performance, however, of the office, her own sincerity and justice to Rosaline, required Erina's refined feelings, prompting her to spare those of Wilmot, framed a relation of events on the foundation of strict veracity, without giving to them that force of colouring her enthusiasm would have employed in the narrative, had she not carefully avoided exciting the sensibility of her auditor not to wound him unnecessarily. Notwithstanding the pains she took to shun affecting Wilmot by her story, the simple relation of its incidents displayed so much sublimity of virtue and sentiment, both in Erina and Rosaline, that Wilmot was deeply touched by the pathetic tale; which proved to him the extent of his misfortune in being obliged to relinquish the hopes he had so lately entertained, that the only woman he could ever love might be destined for him. He forbore, however, to trust himself with the mention of his feelings on a subject his delicacy felt interdicted; he, therefore, merely thanked Erina for having so obligingly gratified him in honouring him with the account of herself that he had been anxious to learn; that anxiety, he added, had not proceeded from impertinent curiosity, but a lively interest for the sister of his dearest friend. "The history with which you have favoured me," continued Wilmot, "has increased that interest beyond

description, I have been deeply affected by the relation of your sufferings, and I should have considered our meeting one of the most fortunate events of my life, had it not subjected me to the misfortune of committing an unlucky mistake; the only apology that can be made for it arises from the supposition I entertained, that your friend, whom you mentioned to have, for some time, been your companion in a convent at Paris, had been placed there with you for education in the absence of relations who had probably been settled in India, whither you were on your voyage to join them under the care of the lady your Parisian friend. The extreme youth of Lady Kinross prevented my suspecting she had formed a connection; which I might have been apprised of, had I understood French sufficiently to have mingled in general conversation when in your society."

"Let me hope, however," continued Wilmot sighing, "that I stand excused in your opinion, and perfectly acquitted in the judgment of Lady Kinross, of any intention to offend in an address I was ignorant of making to a person, not only in rank and fortune above my pretensions, but whom other circumstances forbid my desire of interesting."

" It is impossible, as it would be unjust," replied Erina with ineffable sweetness, " to condemn any one guiltless of the least intention to offend. I must justify you, and Rosaline cannot condemn you."

" This persuasion," cried Wilmot with emotion, " will enable me to die in peace." He paused, sighed deeply, and, crossing his arms, remained a moment in thoughtful silence; then starting, he looked at his watch, and, telling Erina he must depart, sprang from his seat while he respectfully took her hand and snatched up his bonnet. Erina kindly articulated a farewel, and wished him success and happiness. As she spoke, the blood in Wilmot's perturbedly beating heart alternately rushed to and retired from his face; the hand Erina permitted him to hold felt his tremble and turn icy cold; she would have expressed a wish she then indulged, that fortune would favour them with a future more joyful meeting, but an inexplicable sensation and emotion kept her silent while a tear stole down her cheek. Wilmot's glistening eyes noticed with agitation the drop of sympathy stealing down Erina's blooming cheek, which, had he dared, he would have kissed. As the friend of O'Brien, however, he ventured to press her soft yielding hand to his forehead, and

bedew it with a tear, kindred to that which at the moment fell from her eyes.

"Adieu!" cried Wilmot, and in faltring accents ejaculated a second farewel; then fervently aspirated a benediction while he pressed her hand, assuring her one of his last sighs should be a prayer for her felicity.

For this Erina thanked him with a tearful smile, like a faint sun-beam glancing through showers; then told him his happiness and success should often be the subject of her orisons. At that moment a sigh of despair burst from the agitated heart of Wilmot, and Erina trembled at the expression of settled dejection that glanced from his eyes; she recollected with what eagerness he anticipated the fate that might await a soldier, and that the idea of dying for his country, his duty, and fame, had lighted up his fine countenance with a spark of enthusiasm, which evinced that his mind, even in a moment of cruellest disappointment, was alive to the wish of glory that might divert his thoughts from unavailing sorrow to the acquisition of peace in the pursuit of his noble profession; and reverting to his mention of feeling pleased at the prospect of expiring, devoted to the service of his native king-

dom and martial honour, Erina told him to be careful of his life, since a soldier's duty was to live the guardian of his natal land and glory, since his life, rather than his death, would essentially serve his country and obtain renown.

Erina spoke with the spirit of a soldier's daughter and a soldier's sister, and Wilmot caught the animating spark from her as he remembered her father and brother. "I am not only a soldier," he replied, "but I am also a christian; I boast not philosophy but religion; I do not profess insensibility under disappointments, but a hope to bear them with resignation. All I would die for, I feel it equally my duty to live for. Farewel! may Heaven bless and preserve you, beloved sister of my dearest friend. And may you speedily be restored to each other in perfect felicity! Virtue forbids my lamenting my banishment from those I love."

Erina thanked him by returning a benediction equally sincere, and comprehensive of the happiness of all his connections with the best blessings for himself; and Wilmot, assuring her the felicity of those most dear to him must constitute his own, bowed profoundly a last adieu in silence, eloquently

expressive of the regret he felt in leaving her, and departed with that calm dejection, which, marking its impression, is too deep to be soon or easily effaced.

On rejoining Rosaline, traces of tears on her lovely face told Erina she had sympathized in the sorrow she had occasioned Wilmot. The same decorum and delicacy which deterred Rosaline from mentioning him, or questioning Erina about the commission she had undertaken, prevented the latter from making the most distant allusion to any thing that had passed in the interview, from a consideration it would be barbarous to remind her friend of a subject it was equally her wish and interest to forget, at least to cease reflecting upon.

The surprise occasioned, and expressed frequently by Madame d'Evreul, the count, and especially by de Briançon, on the cessation of Wilmot's visits, became embarrassing to Rosaline and Erina, as it was alike impossible for them to explain the cause, or feign astonishment they did not feel. From this aukward situation the two friends were, however, in a few days relieved, by learning from the viscount, that their "*English beau*," as he called Wilmot, had set out on a journey into the interior of the settlement. "He must be a singular young man," remarked de Briançon, "to

prefer travelling to see the Hottentots to enjoying the society of his beautiful countrywomen."—"Assuredly, if all Englishmen be of the same savage disposition," cried the viscount, "they must be a nation of brutes. As for the ladies, they are angels!"

A bow to Erina and Rosaline directed the compliment of their sex to them. His constant gallant attention to Lady Kinross, the complacency with which it was received by her, and the esteem she continually expressed for him, made Erina regard him sincerely, and daily increased her belief that Rosaline was not unhappy.

Wilmot's departure from Cape Town, which de Briançon learned from the Highland officers, permitted Rosaline's accepting, without restraint, the invitations to convivial meetings which were made in return for the compliment of her ball; and in a succession of engagements, the time of their stay at the Cape passed in pleasing variety, without any incident that rendered it interesting, except an occasional interview with Wilmot's brother officers, who spoke his praises with an enthusiasm that gave Rosaline and Erina a favourable impression of their characters.

The time of leaving the Cape at length arrived; and with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain, the fair friends retravelled the road to Table Bay, while every step of their journey thither, and their stay for a night at that place, recalled in the liveliest manner to the thoughts of Rosaline and Erina their meeting with Wilmot, and its consequences.

In a bleak evening, that denoted the approach of winter in those regions, the vessel left the harbour to meet the blustering gales that disturb at that season the waves which wash the African promontory. As the labouring ship rode the foaming billows, their hollow roar was mingled with the howling blasts, while heavy clouds, borne on the rude tempest's wing, were condensed in black vapour upon the Table Mountain and the rocky chain of rugged steeps, whose spiry summits left their barren crags above the mists which roll along their sides.

As Rosaline and Erina passed the English vessel, now preparing for the re-embarkment of the Highlanders, a sigh rose in their bosom to the remembrance of Britain and their friends in Europe, and a tear to the recollection of the amiable and unhappy Wilmot, exiled from every

comfort of his home, beloved connections, and friendship, stole in silence down the cheeks of the fair mourners. They had learned that the interesting youth's destination in India was Bengal, where they were to be stationed; and circumstanced as they were, they did not regret their residence would be far distant from his, and their chance of meeting very improbable, as the French and English settlements have not much inter-communication.

It was now about the middle of June, when in those regions the winter solstice approaching frowns a gloom around. The weather was uncommonly tempestuous, and as the squall increased, and the sea ran mountains high, the dead lights were put up; and the discomforts above stairs, when, tossed by the billows, the vessel shipped oceans on board, which deluged not only the deck, but the cuddy and round-house, confined the ladies to their cabins. Here a scene less confused, but more gloomy, if possible, displayed all the horrors of a voyage in boisterous winds and swelling waves. The violent rolling of the ship, while the rough overwhelming ocean dashed with sudden and reiterated fury against the vessels sides, and made each plank, of which the bark was formed, tremble and crack as if rent in atoms by the repeated

shocks of the roaring waves; the busy trampling of the mariners above, while their hoarse voices, contending with the storm, mingled in discordant vociferations with the howling winds, and deep hollow bellowings of the boiling surges all around; the exclusion of the light of day, one dun ray of which, peeping through a small hole in each of the barricaded windows, shewed the gloom of the wintry sky while it rendered the flame of a solitary pendant lanthorn, pale and faded its feeble gleam, compleated the dreariness of Rosaline's cabin. Here, while the tempest raged in greatest fury, Madame d'Evreul, Erina, and de Briançon, assembled to cheer each other in a situation of such compleat discomfort, as admitted not the possibility of any occupation to fill the tediousness of a weary week; during the course of that time, at his earnest solicitation, the Count de l'Armencour was occasionally admitted as a visitor. Although a lively, polite, agreeable, and accomplished man of fashion, he was not a favourite either of Rosaline or Erina; who soon discovered that his talents were more dazzling than valuable. To brilliancy of wit he added libertine principles; to a clever display of general knowledge, he united a free avowal of atheism; of his handsome figure he was intolerably vain; of his acquirements still more conceited; his elegance was affectation;

proud and overbearing to his inferiors in rank, he was fawningly courteous to those he thought superior to him in dignity; to be envied by the men of the *beau monde*, and courted by the smiles of female consequence, was his first ambition.

The title, the fortune, and the beauty of Lady Kinross, would have attracted the obsequious attentions of the count, had not the refined purity of her soul made her treat him with that reserve which plainly evinced he was despised rather than admired by her; the chilling distance of her manner to him proved she was not to be approached with impertinent gallantry, and that her virtue would have been a sufficient guard of her innocence, even had the protection of de Briançon been less careful that no word or look should offend her delicacy. The volatile viscount united in his behaviour, frankness and decorum; and paid Rosaline the assiduities of a lover, with the esteem of a friend, and the care of a husband. To Erina he shewed fraternal regard; and the self-sufficient count soon found that, although the superior officer of de Briançon, he dared not imagine even a liberty with the youthful beauties under the viscount's protection.

Convinced of this, de l'Armencour, who found it impossible to resist his inclination for intrigue and the habit of gallantry, offered his *devoirs* to Madame d'Evreul: he incensed her vanity with flattery, paid her unremitted assiduities without real admiration, professed passion, without the least sentiment of tenderness, merely to amuse himself, and fill up the tedious leisure of the voyage, was listened to from coquetry, and would have destroyed the virtue, and ruined the reputation, of Madame d'Evreul, had not Rosaline's interposed to save the principles and fame which a dangerous propensity to vanity would have made its victims.

The penetration of Lady Kinross developed compleatly the character and designs of the count, and those of Madame d'Evreul; and watched over her as a guardian angel to apprize her of the dangers of her situation. Education had done but little for Madame d'Evreul, sweetness of temper, some share of personal attractions, and extreme vivacity, with an extraordinary love of adulation, exposed her to infinite peril in the society of a man like de l'Armencour, who had art to seduce women of superior understanding. She had, however, sufficient sense to conduct herself by Rosaline's advice, and avoid the snares set for her

vanity by the count; for vanity, her ruling passion, made her emulous of that delicacy and propriety she saw so admirable in the two English beauties. There is an indescribable charm in modest reserve, and chaste decorum, which influence even those to admire who are not so fortunate as to possess those engaging qualities; an abandoned female cannot avoid reverencing a virtuous woman, and the greatest libertine will respect her even when she disappoints his designs. Such is the homage vice pays to virtue.

The predominant inclination of de l'Armencour was to intrigue with married women; notwithstanding he admired Erina infinitely, he had paid her less attention than any man who had ever been in her company; his assiduities to Madame d'Evreul had for some time compleatly absorbed him; but when, from the influence of Rosaline's representations to her, she had rejected his advances in such a manner as to convince him his plan of seduction would fail, he resolved to avenge himself compleatly on the only woman who had ever dared to withstand his solicitations; and he imagined nothing would so effectually mortify the vanity of Madame d'Evreul, as to offer the homage, of which she had been the object, to Erina. The indifference with which she received his attentions wounded his

pride; and it was so much hurt as to make him resolve on success. He had learned that she was of high birth, was deeply impressed with admiration of her beauty and accomplishments, and determined to obtain her because she would add to his figure and consequence, as she was adored and followed wherever she was seen. As his rank and fortune gave him great pretensions, he had obtained the permission of de Briançon to endeavour to insinuate himself into the favour of his *belle protegée*, as the viscount called Erina; for de Briançon was well assured the count would never succeed in his attempt to gain the affections of a sensible girl, who knew his character too well to regard or throw herself away upon him; and the viscount was malicious enough to wish for an opportunity of humbling the arrogance, and mortifying the vanity of a man who had always piqued himself on being an universal favourite of the ladies, and an irresistible lover wherever he professed himself an admirer. The terms on which he was with de Briançon as his superior officer in the same regiment, made it requisite for the viscount, and the ladies of his family, to behave politely to de l'Armenoour as long as he conducted himself with propriety; which he invariably did, at first from considerations of prudence, knowing the high spirit of de Briançon, and now from

motives of policy as he had a favourite point to carry in making himself agreeable to Lady Kinross while he endeavoured to engage Erina.

Thus situated with his fellow passengers, the count obtained leave to pay a daily morning visit with the viscount to the ladies in their cabin, and join their evening party there, while the violent weather off the Cape prevented the company assembling as usual in the round-house. During this confinement they found it impossible to amuse themselves with any employment, as the rolling and heeling of the ship rendered it impracticable to attend to any thing except to guard themselves from falling or receiving injury from whatever was tossed about the cabin in the general confusion; the furniture had been secured by lashing, yet as many articles could not be fastened, and the motion of the vessel was sometimes sudden, the occasional tumble of some of the company, with other things, often created a scene so truly ludicrous, especially at the hours of repast, that it caused a good deal of merriment. Sometimes the gentlemen entertained the ladies by reading aloud in the evenings; and as they always brought intelligence from deck that the ship was in no danger, the time passed less unpleasantly than could have been imagined.

The weather, at length, clearing up, allowed the passengers to assemble at the captain's table. And as the vessel, after doubling the Cape, once more approached the tropical climates, Rosaline and Erina daily resumed their accustomed seat in the stern-gallery, and their usual walk upon deck. When they came into the latitudes of the torrid zone, the ship, frequently becalmed, floated motionless on the placid deep. Often as the two friends hung over the tranquil expanse of waters, a sigh rose to the memory of past times. They experienced no regret at the delay of their course; for neither Rosaline nor Erina felt any attraction to the eastern shores: happy in each other they were contented in their situation; occupied in the duties of religion, the offices of friendship, the enjoyment of social intercourse, in the cultivation of their mind, and pleased with the pursuit of their elegant accomplishments, the soul of the gentle Lady Kinross and the amiable Erina, like the unruffled bosom of the sea under the equator, remained unagitated by any passion. Wilmot, although never mentioned by either, was remembered by both. Erina daily thought of him with that regard she cherished for her brother, with whose idea that of his friend was inseparably united. Rosaline frequently dwelt on the recollection of Wilmot with a fancy so sublimed by the

reflection of his virtues, that even her own delicacy felt no self-condemnation for cherishing his remembrance. Her increasing esteem for de Briançon, which her gratitude paid as a tribute due for his assiduous attentions, made her believe she should commit an injustice in regretting her connection with him; incapable of doing what her virtue would have condemned, she considered it incumbent on her, not only to be perfectly contented, but happy in the situation she had chosen to enter into; far, therefore, from lamenting the bonds she had formed, she each day became more reconciled to the engagement she had made with de Briançon; every day his character rose in her opinion; and she had hourly cause to bless that connection which had not only rescued her dearest friend from a life of misery, but which afforded them the happiness of each other's society. Erina's smiles became the felicity of Rosaline, and the pleasure she evinced inspired Erina with joy; while both, blessed in continual interchange of those offices, which friendship delights in paying and receiving, experienced that *the most exquisite enjoyment in this world consists in making those around us happy; from the conviction that in the fulfilment of social obligations we are performing a religious duty, and that in acts of kindness we can best imitate Him, whose life ought to*

regulate ours; and who, setting us the brightest example of beneficence, taught it as a new and last commandment, as the test of being His disciple, and thereby proved that the favourite attribute of divinity was to dispense happiness in blessing.

CHAP. XI.

"Knowledge is often attained without any real wisdom; which is only possessed by those whose intellectual faculties expand without the despicable arrogance of self-sufficiency in sense, and by those whose information, founded on principles of true reason, teach it that its best powers are incapable of learning much, that all it can therefore require is little in comparison of that which it must remain ignorant of in this world; where man's best knowledge is a thorough acquaintance with himself, in order to guide him to virtue and true happiness in this sublunary state of trial, and thus lead him to eternal felicity in the regions of immortality."

AFTER a very tedious passage from the Cape, they reached the bay of Bengal, and at length the vessel anchored at the entrance of the river Hoogley; which, flowing from the Ganges to discharge a portion of its copious stream into the sea, is sometimes termed by its name, as its most western branch. Here the viscount, with Rosaline, Erina, Madame d'Evreul, and the

count, left the ship to go up the river in a sloop. As they proceeded to the French settlement of Chandenagore they were charmed by the views which the banks of the Hoogley presented. The rainy season was breaking up, and the rich verdure of the country made it appear a paradise. The wide expanse of the stream wound its way to wash extensive forests that hung in luxuriance over the brink of the water. These woods variegated by trees peculiar to the country, presented a scene of perfect novelty, as well as exquisite beauty to the observant Rosaline and Erina. In some places the groves appeared impenetrable, as thick underwood, entangled in wild vegetation, spread an embowering shade under the umbrageous foilage of the forest. Sometimes, in its shadowy glades, the eye was led to the rural huts of the natives, who were seen busied in their rustic works, or seated in repose under the wide-spreading bananian tree; the rough gigantic trunk of which, with its pendant branches, taking root around its parent stem, and forming arches, enwreathed with its dark green shining leaves, and loaded with its scarlet glossy berries, presented a beautiful contrast to the tall slender boles of the cocoa-nut, palmeto, date, and areca trees; whose waving tops sheltered the low, broad satin-leaved plantain. In some spots a hindoo pagoda, or

temple, or a mahometan mosque, evinced the surrounding groves to be consecrated to the gentoo and moorish worship. In other places, a palace of asiatic architecture extended its light and fantastic arcades to the edge of the river, on whose glitteringly effulgent bosom, superb budgerows, as the eastern barges are denominated, moved along to the song of the rowers, while other barks floated motionless on the stream as their crews sat indolently smoaking or preparing their repast. After a succession of varied views of woods, villages, open country, the buildings erected for the residence of the natives, the garden-houses, or villas of the european inhabitants, some of which rose in grecian architecture, while others, under the appellation of bungalos, displayed the rusticity of thatched cottages, the town of Calcutta, with its fortifications, came in view. A succession of prospects, similar to those already described, delighted the passengers as they proceeded up the river to Chandenagore, where they arrived in perfect health and excellent spirits.

According to the hospitable manners of the East the party were invited to a private house, and entertained with the most friendly courtesy, until they had provided themselves with a habita-

tion. Immediately on their arrival being announced all the respectable inhabitants of the settlement flocked in crowds to compliment the strangers with a visit of welcome. These visits were returned in form; and innumerable invitations followed; which rendered the first weeks of their abode at Chandenagore a scene of extreme dissipation, in which novelty was combined with amusement. The stile of the houses, the manner of living, the mode of dressing, the appearance of the country, and the various languages of the natives, excited, in the feeling hearts of Rosaline and Erina, sensations of mingled pain and pleasure; for while they were pleased with every thing, because it was perfectly new to them, the novelty of all around them reminded them continually of their distance from scenes and friends endeared to ther tenderest affections. Sometimes a sigh and an occasional starting tear marked that their sensibility paid a constant tribute of remembrance to the loved ties of their native home, and the connections of their early years; but the elasticity of their natural vivacity in general supplied that high flow of spirits which distinguishes youth as a season of gaiety.

The elevated rank of Lady Kinross, both as an English countess, and as the wife of the Vis-

count de Briançon, her fortune, and, above all, her personal charms, her accomplishments, and suavity of manners, procured her the homage of the settlement; and she was considered as the queen of fashion and beauty at Chandenagore. Her lovely charge, Erina, shared the attention and admiration paid to Rosaline, and was stiled and worshipped as the deity of celestial graces. Madame d'Evreul also, as a pretty woman newly arrived, received the politest attentions, and would have been more admired had she not been seen and compared with beauty almost beyond the standard of human perfection.

As soon as the first bustle attendant on their arrival was over, the viscount hired a handsome villa on the banks of the Hoogley, at a short distance from Chandenagore, as Rosaline and Erina preferred the airy rural situation of a country house to a residence in the town, especially as the finest season of the year was now advancing. In those regions where the rigours of winter are unknown, where a quick succession of foliage, blossoms, fruits, and flowers, unites all the beauties and pleasures of spring, summer, and autumn, in every month, from October till the sun on the following summer solstice beams heat intense, and the rains commence, the solar rays un-

obscured by a single cloud, except in an occasional storm during the season of the north-westers, or tempests of thunder, lightning, wind and rain, shine with effulgent brightness; and nature smiles in perpetual verdure.

The house de Briançon chose for the residence of his lady and her friend was a spacious dwelling, which spread its arcades to the beautiful view of the Hoogley. A wide verdant avenue of magnificent trees, shooting their branches to form a pleasant shade, led from a colonnade, or varando, as it is called in that country, to a terrace overlooking the river; the silver steram of which was seen from every apartment in the house, and gave an idea of refreshing coolness in the hottest weather. The arcade entrance, which reached entirely across the edifice, led through three arches into a room for dining; adjoining it was the saloon, and on each side of it was a bed-chamber, with two dressing-rooms. The front of the house opened by another varando, or colonnade, into a garden, where orange trees added their delightful fragrance to that of innumerable other blossoming odoriferous shrubs, and a profusion of sweetest scented flowers; amongst which the rose, in delicately blooming tints, and the tuberose, in lily-whiteness, contrasted admirably with the liveliest

colours of every other hue. The balustrade of the colonnades, and the steps leading to them, as the houses in India are generally elevated a few feet from the ground, on account of damps, was overgrown with a luxuriance of creeping plants; amongst which, one resembling jessamine, in the delicacy of its leaves, and bearing a beautiful scarlet flower, afforded the richest effect imaginable, as it clung about the columns, and hung in festoons round the varando.

There were no upper rooms; but small winding stairs conducted to the roof, which, being in that country always flat and formed of mortar, beaten extremely hard, and overlaid with a plaister of lime, as the walls and floors of the houses are done, appeared smooth and polished as marble: a balustrade surrounded the roof, on which was erected a light pavilion; the prospect from whence of the reaches up and down the river presented a view of the most beautiful sylvan scenery.

The garden was extensive, and encompassed entirely the dwelling and a number of detached offices, to which serpentine paths conducted. Some of these paths wound through embowering thickets of flowering shrubs, others were bordered by hedges of mindi, or Indian myrtle, that spread

through the air a strong perfume like mignionette which the mindi flower resembles, though it excels it infinitely both in fragrance and the richness of its tufted blossoms. One long walk surrounded the enclosed ground, forming, at once, a strong fence, and a beautiful umbrageous avenue leading from the central entrance gate on either side of the garden to the river. This walk was overshadowed by bamboo trees, thickly planted; which bending from their roots in long pendant feathery and tapering branches of cane, thick set from the ground to their termination with leaves resembling, in shape and colour, those of the drooping willow, met in an embowering arch, and formed a close dark shady alley, impervious to the rays of the sun, and affording the coolest shelter from its mid-day beam, even in the hottest weather. In this retreat from the fervour of an eastern noon, its scorching influence was forgotten under the waving branches, while the sound of their foliage rustling in the breeze, and the stream of the river seen through the long embowered and verdant arch of interwoven trees, conveyed an idea of refreshing coolness. This beautiful walk enclosed the garden on three sides; the fourth side lay along the river on the banks of which a long terrace opened to an extensive prospect on the opposite side of the water. At each extremity of

this terrace a temple was built as an object of equal ornament and utility; one of these edifices was erected in an octagonal form, and supported by eight columns of the doric order, led down to the river by a flight of steps, affording an opportunity to take boat conveniently, as the slope to the water-edge was too steep, and of too smooth a turf, to admit of descending to the brink of the stream without risk of slipping in. The opposite temple was square, and enclosed to contain a bath, which is considered a necessary luxury in the warm climates of India.

This villa being speedily furnished in the mode of that country, the viscount and his two fair companions took up their residence there in the eastern manner of living.

Although removed out of the town, they had a constant society composed of the families settled in some neighbouring villas, and a great deal of company from Chandenagore, who called in every evening, and formed an agreeable circle for several hours. Occasional invitations to suppers, dances, and musical parties, both at home and abroad, enlivened a scene delightful in itself, and which wanted nothing but the presence of all their beloved friends to render it a perfect paradise of hap-

piness. Rosaline and Erina had, however, too sound an understanding, and too just a sense of religion, to expect, or even desire, felicity unalloyed in this world; and their wisdom and piety led them to enjoy, with thankfulness, the good they were permitted, by Divine kindness, to possess, without lessening it by murmuring, because it was not compleat; for they were firmly persuaded, mortals are allowed all the joys it is fit they should taste in this sublunary state; and that perfect contentment, in every situation allotted to us by Providence, is essential to the lively gratitude we should feel for the least blessings of Heaven, in order to merit their continuance, and obtain more, and that thankfulness to the Supreme, in all conditions, was a species of worship necessary to render the other duties of religion acceptable in the sight of our bountiful Creator. Thus happy from a sense of duty, as well as in a right appreciation of their enjoyments, and blessed in the tranquillity of their virtuous minds, arising from sentiments of self-approbation as much as from each other's society, Rosaline and Erina relished the pleasures surrounding them, and endeavoured to afford as much felicity to the amiable de Briançon, as he anxiously strove to procure for them by all the attentions he could invent, to render their abode with him delightful.

Except when professional duty called him from home, the viscount devoted himself to Rosaline and Erina. Whenever they were occupied with their pencil or needle, he read to them; he attended them on all their visits, he walked with them, drove them out an airing in a phaeton in the evenings, and accompanied them in the mornings a ride on horseback before the sun had rendered the air too warm to take that exercise which was requisite for the preservation of health in a relaxing climate.

On morning, shortly after their arrival at the villa, Rosaline and Erina, with de Briançon, rose, according to custom, at break of day, to take their morning excursion at dawn. They mounted their horses and proceeded together enjoying the salubrious freshness of the cooling breeze, and the gay sight of the sun-beams glistening on the dew-bespangled herbage all around. As they passed along under the shade of a mango grove, innumerable birds, fluttering amongst the spreading boughs, saluted the rising day.

Erina, ever alive to the charms of nature, and continually impressed with religious sentiments, felt her soul awakened by the scene to join in the choral song of praise that swelled on her delighted ear, in the mingled yet harmonious melo-

dies of the warbling choir. Listening to the varied notes of the feathered race, she remarked to Rosaline, that instinct appeared often to teach what reason frequently failed to learn. "The birds and beasts, the scaly tribe, and even the most insignificant reptiles," said Erina, "never omit acquiring the knowledge useful to them, neither do they ever neglect the performance of their duties; human beings alone endowed with rational faculties, are the only ceatures in this world which are prone to commit absurdities, and inclined to pervert instead of improving their powers to the wise ends for which they were bestowed. Mankind, who boast their intellectual superiority, too often forget to reflect sufficiently on the Great Author of their vaunted wisdom; and while the reasoning soul neglects due homage to its known and acknoweldged Creator, the irrational part of his works seem best to proclaim his power, and ever serve their Divine Ruler without any failure. Nature, in its most senseless existence, always appears to feel that Supreme Power, while the human mind, at times, dares impiously to deny him who gave and sustains a life for which they cannot account."

The recollection of the Count de l'Armencour suggested these reflections; and Erina trembled

at the idea that there were atheists in a creation every part of which evinced the infinite wisdom and power of a Supreme Ruler.

Erina was soon roused from this serious train of reflection to attend to the guidance of her horse, as he began to shew a disposition to that ungovernable spirit which renders many of the Indian horses most difficult to manage. The creature had been purchased as an animal remarkable for gentleness, and, until that moment, had appeared to merit the character of docility that had recommended him to Erina.

She possessed the timidity natural to her sex, and was always desirous of avoiding danger, although in every peril she had firmness sufficient to bear it, and even meet it, if requisite, with becoming resolution. Her horse now seemed inclined to call her courage into exertion, for he began to prance, and became quite unmanageable. The attendant of her steed, who was a native of the country, and who, according to the custom of India, always accompanied her in her rides, attempted to assist her in the government of her horse, and seizing the bridle to stop the curvets of the restive animal, endeavoured to lead him out of the road, and pointed to an advancing

crowd, saying something, in the Hindostan language, which Erina could not understand.

Tranquillized by the interference of her attendant, who seemed to have power enough over her horse to keep him quiet in a little grove adjoining the road, Erina directed all her attention to the approaching cavalcade, and distinguished, towering above an encircling crowd of mahometan armed horsemen, a stately elephant. On the back of the most gigantic and noblest of beasts an Asiatic youth was borne on a lofty seat of scarlet velvet, four pillars of burnished gold, that supported a canopy glittering with innumerable ornaments of the same precious metal, attracted the gaze of the admiring spectators. A sight so new and magnificent excited sensations of mingled wonder and pleasure in Erina's mind; absorbed in the observation of the grand spectacle before her, she was watching the procession as it drew near, when her horse, suddenly breaking from the grasp of his keeper, reared several times, and then bounding into the road burst into an opposite thicket, where, with headlong fury, he tore his rider through the entangled mazes of the wood. Erina, who had firmly kept her seat, and retained her presence of mind in spite of the surprise and fright occasioned by an unexpected danger, en-

deavoured, in vain, to rein in her horse. Having made his way, with infinite difficulty and risk, through the impediments which the brush-wood of the thick copse threw in his way, he was just going to plunge into a piece of water that the wood skirted, when Erina, springing from the saddle, fell to the ground. Her foot was entangled in the stirrup, and she would inevitably have been trampled to death under the feet of the animal, in his struggle to disengage himself from her, had not a strong and resolute arm snatched her from the ground, and by that means providentially disengaged her from the stirrup in which her foot was entangled by the band that secured her petticoat from blowing about.

The softness of the sod on which Erina had fallen, together with the elasticity of her bound when she threw herself off the horse, prevented her receiving any injury from the accident; the alarm, however, attending it, agitated her spirits so much that she burst into tears, while she was supported in the arms of her deliverer. Instantly recollecting how infinitely she was indebted to him for her extraordinary preservation, she turned to thank him for her rescue from imminent peril, and raising her eyes to her gallant protector, she

beheld the well-recollected Eastern Prince whom she had seen at the opera in London!

A sweet smile of instant mutual recognition was interchanged between the strangers; a glow of delight illumined the fine features of each. Erina's gratitude, after the first moment of surprise, inspired her with more than usual eloquence in the expression of her thanks to her illustrious deliverer, while he, with equal grace and sentiment, assured her, by the most elegant gestures and language, that he considered himself superlatively blessed in meeting and serving a lady whom he had often feared he might never again be so fortunate to behold. He then enquired, with infinite courtesy and interest, if the accident had occasioned her the injury he apprehended must be the consequence of the fall, which had so greatly shocked him as nearly to unfit him for the exertion requisite for her rescue.

Erina assured her deliverer she had not received any hurt from the fall, adding, that she was sensible of the extreme peril out of which his interference had extricated her, and that she was equally aware of the hazard and difficulty he must have incurred in flying miraculously to her assistance. "I have read," said Erina, smiling, "in

Eastern tales, of guardian genii; and the protection you have afforded me almost persuades me such beings actually exist in these regions."

The prince bowed profoundly, and colouring deeply, solicited permission to assume the honourable title of her attendant spirit; adding, that he would ardently endeavour to fulfil the high office in a manner to convince her how much he prized it and desired to become worthy of the supreme felicity it inspired. "As an inauguration into the honour I solicit," continued the prince, with dignified pleasantry and noble courtesy in his looks and gestures, "permit me, fair lady, to lead you out of this thicket, and conduct you home."

With a smile of assent, and thanks elegantly expressed, Erina accepted the hand of the prince, who politely led her through the entangled bushes that grew, in wild luxuriance, around the trees. They had not proceeded many paces amidst the intricacies of the wood, when the horse, which had conducted the deliverer of Erina to her rescue, was found grazing on the rich herbage that grew in profusion about the shady spot. The vegetation was so luxuriant as to occasion some

difficulty in passing over the unbeaten track, and, as the dew lay impearled on the thick long grass, and was brushed in showers from every leaf and spray, at each step Erina took, the prince entreated her to mount his steed, which was perfectly gentle, and permit him thus to have the honour of leading her on her way to join her friends, who, he felt assured, must be in the most painful alarm. As Erina, in walking, felt an inconvenience in her ancle, which she was desirous of saving from further injury, and was also anxious not to discover, lest it might give unnecessary uneasiness, she consented to accept the offer of the prince's horse: her own had become a fugitive, and she was apprehensive of encreasing the sprain in her foot by an attempt to walk as far as the villa.

Telling her conductor that as she was some distance from home, and as she should be afraid of remounting her own restive horse, should her attendant be able to recover him, she would take advantage of the polite offer, and endeavour to ride the steed his master's recommendation would prevent her feeling any alarm in mounting, although the saddle was not adapted for a female rider. "The seat, however, is broad," said Erina, smil-

ing, " and notwithstanding my accident this morning, I have sufficient courage to prefer riding to walking home."

The horse which the prince seized and resigned to Erina was a large beautiful cream-coloured animal, with the finest flowing tail and mane. He was covered with a net of gold, at which hung many tassels of the same ; the saddle was covered with scarlet velvet, richly embroidered and studded with wrought gold, as were the reins, which were of red Morocco ; on the steed's head waved a plume of feathers of the bird of paradise ; and as he curved his neck, and pawed the ground with spirit, his beauty struck the admiring Erina as a picture such as a poet's or a painter's imagination might seize from fancy, to describe the fabled steeds that ancient fabulists declare were daily harnessed in celestial trappings to draw the chariot of the sun over the starry path of Heaven.

Having assisted Erina, with a courtly grace, to mount the horse, the prince walked beside her, conversing on the occurrence of that morning. After describing, in powerful language, the honour which he had experienced in anticipating that the fright occasioned by his cavalcade would have destroyed the fair rider, whom, with eager haste, he

dismounted from his elephant and flew to save; he requested her to accept the steed she then rode, as he was perfectly gentle, and had been trained to meet and travel with elephants; which many horses could never be brought to encounter without starting and becoming infuriated with terror.

Erina thanked the prince for his offered present without accepting it; and in a short time came in view of the road, where his retinue were stationed in waiting for him.

Surprised at not seeing either De Briançon, Rosaline, or any of the attendants who had accompanied them, the prince, at Erina's entreaty, enquired of his train respecting her friends, and learned they had dispersed in different directions in pursuit of her. Uneasy at this intelligence lest her beloved Rosaline, who was a timid rider, might meet with any accident in search of her; Erina evinced, both in her looks and words, the anxiety she experienced. The prince, eager to dispel her apprehensions, instantly dispatched numbers of his followers about the place in quest of his fair companion's associates, and to inform them of her safety.

The singularity of the incident which had that

morning occurred to Erina, and the extraordinary circumstance of her being surrounded by the retinue of an Eastern prince, and entirely in his power, without one companion of her acquaintance, her own sex, or her own country, struck her at once with a species of amazement and dread. As she gazed around her on the crowd of scrutinising observers, she trembled at the sight of the armed train, whose appearance was equally martial and strange in her opinion. The native soldiers she had seen in the service of the French settlement had not the warlike aspect of the sepoys she now beheld: their stature, accoutrements, enormous turbans, and large mustaches, gave them a ferocious look. The character she had heard of the asiatics made her feel a shock at seeing herself, undefended, in the power of Mahometan prince, to whose dispositions she was an entire stranger: his demeanour, it is true, had impressed her with a very favourable opinion of him; yet she had heard that the Moorish men of high birth and education frequently concealed the worst principles under the most engaging exterior. The idea that her deliverer might be of this description seemed to her a species of ingratitude for which she could not avoid reproaching herself severely; especially when his deportment became, if possible, more delicately re-

spectful as he observed her encreasing embarrassment and uneasiness at the absence of her friends.

At length, after much anxiety, she perceived some of the prince's horsemen advancing with the viscount and her beloved Rosaline. As they rode at a good pace, Erina was speedily joined by her friends: on being most affectionately congratulated respecting her fortunate escape, she introduced her deliverer to de Briançon and Lady Kinross, with a gratitude equal to that they expressed for the services he had rendered them at a conjuncture which, without his interposion, must have terminated fatally to Erina and their happiness. "I am at a loss," said Rosaline, addressing herself to the prince, for language sufficiently animated to thank you as I ought for the preservation of my dearest friend; I can only assure you, sir," she continued, while tears glistened in her eyes, "that my esteem and my eternal gratitude towards the deliverer of my beloved companion will be in exact proportion to my affection for her."

In an eastern salutation, elegantly expressive of chivalric sentiment and courtesy, the prince bent in a profound obeisance to the fair friends, while he entreated them to believe that he considered the

pleasure of serving them a reward sufficient without any other remuneration; but notwithstanding that conviction, he boasted not, he said, disinterestedness enough to reject the offered recompence of friendship, although he felt it far exceeded the value of his services. "Instead of considering you, fair ladies," continued the prince, "at all my debtors, I esteem myself infinitely obliged in your testimony of gratitude, which extremely over-values my deserts. I shall, however, emulate your noble generosity, in the most ardent endeavours to merit, if it be possible, that esteem you gratuitously honour me in bestowing on me."

Rosaline and Erina bowed a graceful acknowledgment of the courtesy of their eastern hero; whom Lady Kinross, with the sweetest urbanity, thus addressed: "Our meeting in my own country is too well recorded in my memory to admit of my forgetting, that in the deliverer of my dearest friend I have the honour of addressing a person who was, in England, introduced to my knowledge as one of princely rank. The obligation your highness has conferred on me, in the care of my beloved companion, claims not only my thanks, which I have endeavoured to express, but demands every testimony that can evince the

high regard I must ever feel for those amiable dispositions which impelled you to her rescue, and the esteem I must always entertain for the qualities and abilities which, in winging you to the aid of a stranger, rendered the assistance your highness was prompted to afford effectual to her preservation from the most imminent danger. How to express my sense of your merits will be as difficult as I found it arduous to speak my gratitude for the service you rendered me; but if your highness will honour my villa by your presence, every effort of hospitality shall joyfully be exerted to prove my sentiments for an equally amiable and illustrious guest."

The prince, with as much grace as delight, accepted the polite invitation of Rosaline; who, with the viscount and Erina, led the numerous cavalcade towards their residence, while the deliverer of the grateful girl requested to keep his station beside her as a pedestrian escort of her steed, gallantly assuring her, with an elegant pleasantry, the office of her attendant, with which she had invested him, under the title of a guardian genius, was infinitely superior, both in honour and felicity, to the supremest regal dignity. As he continued to lead her horse homeward, his conversation evinced a brillancy of wit, a solidity

of understanding, an elegance of taste, and a refinement of sentiment, that charmed Erina, who thought him the handsomest being she had ever beheld. His dress, less magnificent than that he wore when she saw him in London, was equally picturesque and becoming. A turban of the finest snow-white muslin, without any adornment of jewels, admirably suited the beautiful contour of his bust, giving spirit to the expression of a countenance in which every feature was perfect. His vestments, made in the best eastern taste, were of a delicate woollen manufacture, and of the brightest scarlet, which was enlivened by a sash of muslin, of the same texture and colour as his turban, and a drapery of white shawl that was enveloped in gracefully flowing soft folds round his elegant figure. The dignity of his motions, and his commanding air, declared his sovereign rank, while the finished courtesy of his manner, and the elegant ease of his conversation, evinced him to be as much the man of sentiment as education, and equally the prince and scholar.

To an excellent breakfast, spread in the octagon temple that overlooked the river, Lady Kinross and the viscount invited their illustrious visitor, whilst Erina presided at the table with united graces of exquisite politeness, perfect beauty, and

youthful spirits, rendered irresistibly enchanting by virgin modesty.

The exercise of riding, added to the freshness of the morning air that was cooled by the dewy moisture, yet spangling on every leaf of the surrounding shades, and glistening on the verdant terrace that was washed by the swiftly gliding current of the full-flowing Hoogley, called all the blooming roses of health and vivacity into Erina's cheeks, while the smile of benevolence dimpled round her coral lips, and innocent gaiety, blended with intelligence and delicacy of sentiment, sparkled in the lustre of her eyes. Throwing off her hat, which was more troublesome than useful in the temple surrounded by luxuriant trees and shrubs that spread their foliage and blossoms to shelter them from every sun-beam, Erina's fine auburn hair, which had been dishevelled by the rapid movements of her horse, fell on her shoulders in glossy tresses, that in hue and brightness emulated gold when highly burnished. Rising in playful confusion from her occupation at the breakfast table, she was hastily retiring from the company to her chamber to adjust her deranged locks, when the lively Rosaline starting up requested to be allowed the pleasure of officiating as her friend's handmaid. To this proposal, at de Bri-

ançon's entreaty, that Erina would not leave the temple, she consented; and sitting down on the steps leading to the river was submitting her hair to Rosaline's care, when the volatile viscount, declaring himself a superior adept in the art of hair-dressing, as his countrymen, he said, were universally allowed to be the best *frisseurs* in the whole world, and to excel, in points of taste relating to the *toilette*, gaily pushed the *belle fille de chambre*, as he now called Rosaline, aside, and began, in a very droll and aukward manner, to adjust the beautiful hair of the laughing Erina; who, with the most engaging and unaffected playfulness, rallied him on being particularly *mal adroit*, and exceedingly *gauche* in his pretension to a talent for which he was extremely unfitted.

The prince, who stood by an amused spectator of this little entertaining scene of youthful sportiveness, approached the sprightly trio of friends, and, in a manner of delicately lively gallantry, assured Erina, that by virtue of his office, the care of her beautiful tresses must, by right, devolve on him. "The precedent on which I ground my claim to the monopoly of such an enviable honour," continued the prince, with spirited pleasantry, is of high authority; for that attendant sylphs, or spirits, are entrusted with the decora-

tion of female charms is known by every one to be on record in a singularly beautiful and elegantly original work of the justly celebrated Pope; who, in the "Rape of the Lock," assures us, that one of the genii, who lay in watchful ambush in the captivating ringlets of Belinda, was actually "cut in twain," in the post of guarding her favourite locks. "As your's, fair lady," added the prince, "must be in equal danger of being coveted as a prize by some daring hand, it shall be as much my care to defend them from all assault, as to dispose them in the most elegant order; and I must, therefore, assert my right to arrange your tresses, and dispute the honour with this gentleman."

Thus saying, he advanced, with equal politeness and gaiety, to perform the office for which he had, with such a lively pretence, contended; while the viscount, with as much pleasantry, resigned it, assuring the prince, he was sensible the claims of his highness must supersede any he could advance; "because," said de Briançon, "I pretend not to supernatural power in the business of female toilettes, although I have been accustomed to attend them, neither dare I presume to contest a point, even of gallantry, with sylphs or genii, notwithstanding my readiness to

engage in the service of the fair sex, and to defend them as a soldier."

The blushing Erina, with a gracious smile, thanked de Briançon for his gallant professions, which she felt assured would be found sincere if put to the proof; and curtesying her acknowledgments in sportive grace to the prince, she told him, she held herself most fortunate in having an attendant at her toilette whose offices would, by being performed by magical agency, save her an infinity of trouble; and saying this, she hastily bound up her shining tresses with the most becoming negligence, and resumed her station and superintendance of the breakfast-table.

The prince took some refreshment, and expressing his taste for European customs, and those of England in particular, he fell into a conversation on the subject of British manners and literature, which evinced he had been as attentive a traveller, as he was a judicious student; for he discovered, that the book of nature and the volumes of general science were not only familiar to him, but that his understanding and feelings had been highly cultivated by his acquisition of *knowledge: a thing often attained without any real wisdom, which is only possessed by those whose intellec-*

tual faculties expand without the despicable arrogance of self-sufficiency in sense, and by those whose information, founded on principles of true reason, teach it, that its best powers are incapable of learning much; that all it can therefore acquire, is little in comparison of that which it must remain ignorant of in this world; where man's best knowledge is a thorough acquaintance with himself, in order to guide him to virtue and true happiness in this sublunary state of trial, and thus lead him to eternal felicity in the regions of immortality.

CHAP. XII.

"It is equally imprudent, as it is indecorous and nonsensical, for a female heart to trust itself with a supposition of having made a conquest until it be declared; lest a dangerous prepossession in favour of an agreeable object take root under a notion the sentiment is authorized by a congeniality of feeling; and, thus nurtured to maturity, spread itself as a poisonous weed difficult to be eradicated until it lay waste the mind, and become fatal not only to peace, but the fame of virgin delicacy and female repute; which, receiving the slightest stain, remains irrecoverably tarnished."

As Erina almost wondering, remarked the numerous acquirements and the excellent principles, which, with the most unaffected modesty, the prince displayed as the natural refinement of a correct taste and judgment, and the genuine effusions of the most amiable dispositions, without the least tincture of conceit or pretension, she felt her esteem for this illustrious youth encrease every in-

stant, and far surpass the extraordinary admiration the first sight of him inspired and each succeeding look heightened. He spoke of his visit to England with delight, and mentioning that it had expanded his mind, he said, he should ardently have wished to prolong his stay in a country which would have improved his intellectual faculties, and cultivated his taste, had not filial affection made him impatient to return to parents, who, in permitting his absence had sacrificed their individual happiness to his advantage and the good of their country.—"It is in Britain," added the prince, "that the elegant arts, commerce, science, and virtue, flourish under the best possible mode of government, which affords real liberty without licence to infringe the laws that are requisite for the maintenance of order and propriety:—In that happy land of freedom the honest man of every degree, lives in the secure enjoyment of those rights, the lowest class possess equally with the highest rank, while the rogue of all orders, is amenable to justice; who weighs in the same scale the rich and poor, the high and low, and brandishes the sword of execution for the terror of guilt alone. To pronounce," continued the prince, "that the administration of government even in England is perfect, would scarcely be strictly true; since the imperfection of human na-

ture must always be evident in all its institutions, and in the execution of its wisest plans: this therefore being the case, we must call that social compact the best that mortals can devise, which like the constitution of England, puts the most effectual barriers to every evil which may occur in an association of corrupt individuals. In Britain alone exists that just balance between all degrees of the state that renders each order in it equally dependent on, and necessary to the other; which, placing the power of every rank in exact counterpoise, consolidates and strengthens a government that the experience of ages has proved to be superlatively judicious.

"But from the very perfection of the British constitution, its destruction may originate: in its power of correcting abuses that may arise, and regenerating itself by the repeal and enaction of laws, it may abrogate those on which its welfare depends, and decree others destructive of a system that has placed it on a pre-eminence above all nations; unless England, ever remaining justly proud of her acknowledged superiority, guard with a watchful eye her true interest in preserving her glorious constitution from any violation by innovations, which bearing the semblance of reform,

may be proved fallacious when the evils thus introduced may be irremediable.

" It often happens that blessings are not sufficiently prized until lost; and it is too frequently the case that the possessors of great advantages are less sensible of their value than those who are not so fortunately situated: hence it arises, that the English are often discontented both with their climate and government whilst superlatively blessed in each.

" It must not, however," continued the prince, " be imagined that in this opinion I depreciate my own country and its laws:—on the contrary, I am sensible that the hand of Providence dispenses over the whole creation an equal share of benefits; those benefits are always suited to the situation, which forms the national manners every where to characteristic peculiarity—hence it naturally follows, that the inhabitants of every place imbibe a partiality for their own country, customs, and government, as particularly adapted to themselves: this disposition of strong attachment to our native land, having beneficial consequences, is a laudable sentiment, unless it degenerate to illiberal prejudices against other countries and every nation whilst we prefer our own. The latter is allow-

able and even amiable—the former is equally absurd as it is unjust."

The prince spoke of his country with all the affection that denoted the firmest patriotism, mingled with the utmost liberality: he mentioned his father with extraordinary reverence, and talked of his mother in terms of such enthusiasm as did equal honour to her character and his own.

As he was a thorough master of the English language, and understood French, he expressed his thoughts to his entertainers with as much elegance as fluency; and telling them he was just arrived from Azimabad, on a mission from his father which might detain him some time at Chandenagore, he solicited permission to renew his visit; and having received a courteous invitation from the viscount and Lady Kinross, the prince soon after breakfast took leave of them and Erina with a grace expressive of equal sentiment and politeness.

De Briançon in compliment to his illustrious visitor, attended him to the retinue in waiting for him at the front of the house, where the ladies repaired to take a view of the elephant. The stately and sagacious animal, as if conscious of his

pre-eminence in the princely cavalcade, moved with a dignity that seemed to render him worthy of bearing the noble commander of a sovereign's train.—The grand creature was one of the largest of his kind—his gigantic size appeared astonishing, encreased as it seemed by the lofty tower on his back, while his amazing bulk was rendered more conspicuous by a covering of scarlet velvet richly fringed all round, and embossed at the four corners with gold work terminated with tassels reaching nearly to the ground.—The enormous chest of the elephant and his forehead were ornamented by plates of gold wrought in the richest manner, and fastened with trappings of scarlet decorated with golden studs and chains.—His conductor sat on his neck, and an attendant gayly habited with an eastern fan in his hand, was stationed behind the seat in the tower, the golden pillars and scarlet canopy of which, wrought in the most costly manner, and richly fringed and tasselled all around like the elephant's covering, glittered in dazzling effulgence to the brilliant beams of an Indian noon when the sun shone in its brightest splendour.

A camel on each side of the elephant surrounded by sumpter horses magnificently caparisoned, armed horsemen, and a crowd of pedestrian attendants, bearing various insignia of their offices

in the prince's service, stood in order amidst his train, and saluted him in the Asiatic manner on his appearance as he advanced towards them, while in his lofty air the stately demeanour of sovereign rank was admirably blended with the most gracious princely courtesy.

Leaving Rosaline and Erina in the colonnade, he descended the steps leading from it, and taking the bridle of the beautiful steed which had brought Erina home, the prince conducted the well-trained creature to her, and soliciting her acceptance of it, he assured her he thought the horse that had been honoured by carrying her, too highly dignified to be employed in any service but her own.

Erina, who had equal spirit and delicacy, felt them revolt at the idea of laying herself under such an obligation to a stranger, as to accept a present not only extremely costly, but almost invaluable: for the horse from his extraordinary beauty and qualities she judged must be most highly appreciated, and his furniture, enriched as it was with gold, she was certain could not fail of being very precious.

The manner in which the gift had been offered

made Erina feel that the mode of her refusal should be equally delicate; yet, notwithstanding the gracious elegance of her rejection, she perceived it had wounded a nobly generous and exquisitely feeling mind. "I am aware," said the prince, "that some apology may be requisite to an European lady for the liberty I have taken in offering a gift on first acquaintance"———

The prince looked grave, and paused:—Erina smiled and courtesied with an expression which seemed to acknowledge herself extremely grateful for, rather than the least offended by, an act of gallant courtesy; while the prince, assuming an air of dignity tempered by politeness, assured her the manners of his country not only authorised, but absolutely demanded the homage of a present on introduction to a person of superior pretensions.—A profound obeisance pointed this compliment as it was intended, and a deep blush suffusing the beauteous cheeks of Erina, evinced her heart understood the gallantry of the prince, who saying with a look of mingled admiration and deference, that he dared not presume to repeat an offer which had not been honoured by acceptance, paid the graceful homage of an Asiatic salutation to each of the company, and vaulting on the elephant with elegant agility, he bent in a parting

salute to the viscount, Rosaline, and Erina, while they stood in admiration of the pre-eminent graces of their illustrious visitor, as his train moved off in an equally superb and impressive pomp.

As Erina followed the departing cavalcade with a gaze of pleasure, her friend Lady Kinross rapturously extolled the beauty, the elegance, the taste, the sense, and above all the incomparable gallantry of the prince. To those high encomiums the grateful girl, who was deeply impressed with the idea that she was indebted to the handsome and noble stranger for a miraculous preservation from a dreadfully sudden death, or, perhaps, a horridly lingering existence in excruciating torments, from the terrible fracture of limbs, joined not only her tribute of praise, but of the most lively gratitude towards her deliverer. Enlarging on this pleasing theme she was retiring to her chamber when the gay de Briançon, after uniting in the eulogiums on their illustrious visitor, told Erina she had done amiss in refusing the offer of the beautiful horse, as he should insist on her own being entirely discarded.—"Should the deserter ever be seized," cried the viscount, "we must hold a court-martial on him, and as he must be found guilty of disobedience of orders and cowardice prior to desertion, I should sentence the delin-

quent to three distinct punishments in the succession of his offences—in the first place he should be flogged—his second chastisement should be a dismissal from the service—and lastly, after the merited degradation of being broken, since he has proved himself unworthy of remaining in the service of his fair mistress, he should certainly be shot as a deserter."

Erina laughed at this odd flight of the viscount; —then retiring to her room she seized the first moment of seclusion to offer up a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Heaven for the signal mercies she had that morning received. The strain in her foot had occasioned a slight swelling, attended with encreased uneasiness, which every moment reminded her of her fortunate escape, and forcibly impressed on her the almost miraculous deliverance from the imminent danger of sudden destruction, or the still more shocking fate of living in torture, to drag on an existence, without any enjoyment, as a miserably maimed and helpless object, a burthen to herself, and still more so to those kind friends on whom she was now thrown a dependant. As the peril she had escaped passed in review through her imagination, innumerable tumultuous sensations crowded into her mind and awakened her sensibility to the strongest emotions,

amongst which gratitude to Providence and to the instrument of its mercy, was the most powerful sentiment.

Rosaline now, according to custom, summoned her friend to the varando, where they usually passed the morning in their various elegant employments.

No longer afraid of alarming Rosaline, Erina mentioned the trivial inconvenience she experienced from the sprain, and consented to submit it to the care of a medical attendant at the solicitation of her anxious friends. As the injury was of little consequence, a few remedies, and a short confinement, restored her to perfect ease, and entire freedom.

In the meanwhile the account of her accident, as might naturally be expected, was mentioned in the course of a few hours, in every house in and about Chandenagore, where, as may easily be supposed, the intelligence of the admired Erina's escape from destruction through the intervention of the newly arrived and handsome prince of Azimabad, made him the hero of a tale, which became for several days the constant theme of every society, where the various dispositions of the seve-

ral circles made innumerable comments and additions to the story as it passed in frequent repetition in its circulation.

A crowd of enquirers respecting Erina's health daily and hourly resorted to the villa she inhabited, where her deliverer was mentioned with the voice of praise that did justice to his merits, while Erina with delicate encomiums readily acknowledged her obligations to the gallant prince.

With anxious solicitude he himself regularly waited on Rosaline and her fair friend, whom he found constantly surrounded by a train of visitors equally assiduous as he was in paying the homage of adulation.—His, however, evinced itself in attentions so peculiarly elegant and delicately refined, that Erina could not avoid drawing continual comparisons between him and a crowd of young coxcombs, who endeavoured to be distinguished by their assiduities to the belle whom the unanimous voice declared superlatively lovely. Amongst those who were candidates for Erina's smiles, the Count de l'Armencour was the foremost in pretension: his rank, fortune, and high opinion of himself, rendered him the most pre-eminent gentleman in the settlement; and the date of his acquaintance with Lady Kinross and her fair friend

and charge, prior to their arrival at Chandenagore, gave him claims to their attention superior to those the society of the settlement could boast: on the plea therefore of having been the fellow-passenger of Rosaline's and Erina's voyage to India, he founded a right to intimacy which they could scarcely refuse the superior officer of de Briançon's regiment, without a gross violation of civility, and an infringement of propriety, in which the interest of the viscount was too much implicated to admit of Rosaline's and Erina's risking the chance of offending the Count's pride, as they were sensible he would revenge any insult of that kind by an affront which the high spirit of de Briançon would prompt him to notice in a manner that must terminate fatally to him in every possible circumstance and event.

The gratitude Lady Kinross and Erina felt towards their kind protector and agreeable friend and companion the viscount, independent of innumerable other considerations of an equally delicate nature, made them resolve to tolerate the visits of de l'Armencour, although they did not at all esteem his character. In consequence of his assumed claims, which it would have been imprudent for Rosaline and her gentle friend to dispute, the count was a daily member of their society.

His conduct ever decorous and even unexceptionable in every respect towards the viscount's family, entitled him to all the civilities, courtesy and hospitality prescribe; and under the pretensions of his rank in life, and in the army, and a professed regard for de Briançon, de l'Armencour was received politely, not only as an old acquaintance of the viscount, but as his intimate friend.

Although motives of vanity, equally with inclination, impelled him to pay the most marked attention to Erina, as the most beautiful, the most accomplished, the highest born, and the most celebrated girl wherever she appeared; yet the assiduities of the count, notwithstanding they were noticed by the whole settlement, as he intended they should be, to encrease the consequence and reputation of pre-eminent fashion which he was ambitious of acquiring, were not of a nature to admit of Erina's delicacy appearing to understand their meaning; her virgin modesty made her shrink from the indecorum of shewing the least inclination of arrogating to herself unavowed assiduities by declaredly rejecting them; but the delicacy and timidity that restrained her from acknowledging the appropriation of an undeclared lover's attentions, rendered her as distant and reserved in

her behaviour to the count as it was possible to be without prudery or affectation.—Gay without levity, she united the most correct prudence to perfect ease of address, while the refinement of her manners evinced the purity of her mind, and her virgin delicacy in every look, word, and action, pourtrayed the most becoming maiden modesty combined with vivacity, and innocence, which made her the child of nature.

The affable courtesy with which she received the attentions of a large circle of acquaintance, prevented any of them feeling themselves particularly distinguished by favours equally shewn to all the visitors and associates of de Briançon and lady Kinross.—Nothing but the consummate conceit of the Count de l'Armencour could have made him flatter himself that the politeness of Erina was a demonstration of regard for him, and nothing but the vanity which persuaded him he was ever the chief object of admiration and consequence in all companies he frequented, could have convinced him he was distinguished by Erina's partiality, whilst the only preference she shewed amongst her general acquaintance was directed as a just tribute of the most lively gratitude she felt due to her illustrious deliverer. Whenever the prince was announced in his constant evening visits at the

villa, Erina's eyes sparkled with pleasure; the heightened glow in her cheeks evinced the youth was infinitely more interesting in her opinion, than the crowd of adulators by whom she was always surrounded.—She took no pains to conceal that the respectful obeisance of the prince, his rational and generally serious conversation, and the tacit commendation of one approving look from his intelligent and expressive eyes, was more agreeable to her than all the compliments, the flattering speeches, and incessant assiduities even of the most esteemed characters amongst the European visitors of her friends. Often indeed, she was led to draw a comparison between the amiable Asiatic, and the coxcombs of the settlement, in whose presence the illustrious youth shone as a diamond of the first brilliancy when compared with its worst imitation. United to the most nobly courteous manners of a prince, Jaffier Mahomed in every look, word, and action, evinced he was born not only to rule, but to be a hero.—Extraordinary dignity of deportment softened by that politeness which shews itself to be as much the impulse of a gentle and benevolent nature, as the effect of highly polished education, gave to the prince that soft tone of voice and sweetness of address that universally win the heart; prepossessing every one with a favourable opinion of a per-

son even in the lowest class of life, if gifted with this engaging urbanity, and rendering those of the highest rank pre-eminently charming to all with whom they associate.

A short time after Erina's accident, Rosaline invited a numerous company to an evening entertainment which was to consist of a concert and supper. Several professors of music and some *amateur* performers were engaged, to aid the powers of Lady Kinross and her friend in the charming art of vocal and instrumental harmony, who, on the appointed evening assembled at the villa.

Every apartment in it was thrown open, according to the Indian custom, and splendidly lighted with wax, while the front and back varando were brilliantly illuminated with lamps ranged round the cornice, balustrade, and wreathing spirally about the pillars, between which festoons of lights intermingled with rich garlands of flowers hanging amidst a blaze of lamps, threw an appearance of festive enchantment on the scene. The moon shining in full radiance in an unclouded sky, thickly studded with innumerable sparkling stars, which glittered with encreased effulgence from the dark blue of the clear and serene firmament, silvered the dew-bespangled garden, every shrub of which

glistened with dewy moisture, and swarms of fire-flies twinkling with phosphoric brightness as they hung in myriads on every tree and flower, and blade of grass, giving as it were an effect of magical lustre to the surrounding shades; while the broad argentine stream of the beautiful river, seen from every room, as its rapid current glided lucent in the moon-beam, and the distant lights gleaming from the opposite banks of the Hoogley, completed the brilliancy of a scene which cannot be described with justice.

As Rosaline and her friend were seated in the varando nearest the river, enjoying a view of the united splendours of art and nature, where each seemed to vie with the other, their attention was attracted by a number of advancing lights which announced the arrival of the expected guests. Among a train of attendants, some of whom bore shields and scimitars, while others carried massive staves of silver and gold that glittered to the flames of branching flambeaux elevated as insignia of high dignity; a fly-palanquin, as a seat of state, enriched with a canopy of scarlet velvet embroidered, fringed, and tasselled with gold, and supported by four scarlet-liveried bearers, approached from the gate leading to the villa. This train bespoke the arrival of the prince of Azimabad, who

was soon announced according to the Eastern manner, and, in conformity with the ceremony due to the rank of his illustrious visitor, the viscount de Briançon welcomed Jaffier Mahomed at his entrance into the house, and conducted them to the ladies.

Whilst Rosaline and Erina watched his approach, they were struck with the extraordinary magnificence of his dress.—It was similar to that in which they had seen him at the Opera-house in London, but if possible, more rich, and a greater profusion of jewels glittered in his diadem, his turban, on his vest, and the band of gold tissue which encompassed his waist.—From the dagger he wore in his girdle, chains of diamonds, like those that encircled his neck, hung in numerous drops, clasped with studs of rubies, emeralds, topaz, amethysts, and sapphires. Clusters of these precious gems darted varied lustre from his tasteful turban of gold tissue, and armlets of brilliants added splendour to a habit equally rich, picturesque, and becoming.

As he bent in an Asiatic salutation to Rosaline and Erina, a look of inexpressible sentiment gave interest both to his fine countenance and figure—sensibility beamed in the glances of his eyes, the tenderest benevolence sweetened his smile, the

most refined courtesy softened his voice to melliflucus tones and cadence, and intelligence combined with finished politeness, rendered him at once the most attractive and interesting of beings.

Taking, as usual, his seat near Erina, he began to discourse, according to custom, on serious, elegant, and sentimental subjects, until a throng of guests entering, diverted the attention of the amiable girl. A crowd of young Frenchmen soon gathered round her, and adulated her with complimentary speeches while the prince silently withdrew, yet paid the more flattering assiduity of riveted observation on her every glance, word, and action. When the Count de l'Armencour was announced, the *beaux* who had aspired to engross the greatest share of Erina's smiles, yielded their place to the man whose vanity made him esteem himself the most favoured of lovers, though yet undeclared. The easy familiarity of de l'Armencour declared conceit and self-sufficiency rather than love: yet the charms of the lovely object to whose affections he pretended had inspired him with as lively sentiments for her as the highest admiration of himself could allow of his feeling for any one.—In his passion for the celebrated and beautiful Erina, the count's self-love was grati-

fied so as to render his attachment for her stronger and more constant than any sentiment he had ever felt for any other woman; he pursued her however with desire rather than affection, and in his attentions to her there was not that refined delicacy, that undescribable assiduity, that undefinable timidity, which, as an invariable attendant on true love, discovers it even without a declaration of itself in a manner that must touch the most insensible object with tenderest sensations of pity, even when the heart is not disposed to return, or even encourage the sentiment.

Erina was so thoroughly unconscious of her own attractions, and so little versed in the subject of gallantry, that the count's would have escaped her notice, had not de Briançon, in raillying her on the theme, announced to her the intentions of de l'Armencour. Unauthorized as she felt herself to reject attentions, the aim of which remained undeclared, she flattered herself that, without pointedly avoiding his civilities, a polite indifference to his assiduities would sufficiently explain to him how impossible it would be for him ever to interest her heart: but the count was too much impressed with a high estimation of his power to charm, to doubt of Erina's eagerly accepting the addresses of a man of his consequence whenever

he avowed a serious wish to obtain her hand: the opinion he entertained of women in general, with whom he had been too successful to allow of his thinking highly of the virtue of the sex, did not prevent his giving some credit to their prudence; and to this quality rather than to genuine modesty, he attributed the decorous reserve of Erina. An admiration of her beauty, instead of the least appreciation of her mental perfections, made him desirous of gaining her person, without an ardent wish to fix her affections. Thus empassioned, rather than tenderly attached, the Count de l'Armencour followed Erina more from fashion, and the hope of being regarded as the favoured lover of a girl universally admired, than because he was deeply enamoured. The anxious desire of distinguishing himself by attentions to a celebrated beauty of high birth, as he understood her descent was both ancient and illustrious, and the gratification he anticipated in rivalling a numerous train of admirers who adulated Erina, and killing all the ladies who he was vain enough to imagine must absolutely be languishing in love for him, and who would therefore certainly die of envy and jealousy by his distinguishing with the title of Countess, the superiorly accomplished and superlatively beautiful Erina, afforded such exquisite delight to the vanity of the conceited de l'Armencour at the

present, as to prevent his feeling impatient for the triumph he was assured he could not fail to obtain whenever he desired it.—His attentions were calculated to monopolize Erina rather than to woo her, and to prevent the addresses of any other admirer whilst he delayed the offer of his hand in order to be courted by many of the inhabitants of the place, where as a man of rank and fortune many flattered him with the most assiduous adulation to engage him as a match for their daughters, their sisters, or any girl for whom they were highly interested. The marked attentions he paid Erina had rendered her an object of envy to a number of girls and their parents; but she was too unassuming and too perfect to afford envy itself the power of uttering one syllable in her disfavour, and those who most feared her as a rival, were compelled to unite in the public voice which unanimously declared her incomparable both in mind, accomplishments, and person.

On the night of Rosaline's concert, Erina, ever desirous to please from the sweetness of her disposition rather than from any wish of exciting admiration, exerted herself particularly to be agreeable, as a delicate attention to her friends, and in honour to the entertainment which they were anxious to render as charming as possible, in return

for the hospitality which had been shewn them on their arrival in that country. The utmost benevolence, the most elegant politeness, evinced itself in every look and word of Lady Kinross and her lovely friend, as they addressed the circle of their numerous guests.

After the overture which opened the concert, a duet on the piano-forte and harp shewed the musical powers and taste of Rosaline and Erina to the highest advantage. At the conclusion of the piece which equally surprised and delighted the company, a buz of applause and innumerable compliments declared the effect the charming musicians had produced. Amongst a throng of *beaux* who crowded round Erina to pay the tribute of adulation, the Count de l'Armencour praised her talents with the ease of a courtier anxious to display his high breeding, rather than impelled by feeling the eulogium due; while his air evinced he was proud of Erina's accomplishments, as they tended more to give him a figure than to charm him as a pretender to her favour. Apprized of his views, and acquainted with his character as Erina had for some time been, it was not difficult for her penetration to fathom the thoughts and feelings of de l'Armencour, and she could scarcely forbear discovering the contempt and even dislike she had

for the equally vain and despicable count. As she turned from him with disgust, concealed out of politeness, and still more from consideration of her friend de Briançon, with an air of perfect indifference she left de l'Armencour to enjoy his self-sufficiency, and was passing through a circle of gazing, bowing, and smiling young coxcombs, when she met the prince advancing towards her. As he profoundly bent in a graceful reverence, while he thanked her for the exquisite pleasure her music had afforded him, there was something in the expression of his countenance, in his air, and even in the tones of his voice, which said to her more than language could have disclosed; and Erina experienced more gratification from the homage of the prince's thanks, than she had received from the flattering panegyrics of all the rest of the company, or even the extraordinary encomiums of the musical professors who lavishly extolled her performance as superlatively excellent.

A song by Erina followed, which she accompanied on the harp, while an encircling crowd stood round her in mute attention to the dulcet tones of her voice and instrument: amongst this throng the vain de l'Armencour rendered himself impertinently conspicuous by an air of haughty sauciness, and a look of proud exultation which

evinced he arrogated consequence to himself from the charms and accomplishments of Erina: self-gratification, more than admiration of her extraordinary talents and beauty, was depicted in his countenance. Close beside him and near Erina the prince had stationed himself in rapt attention to the lovely musician, and the sweet harmony she produced. Jaffier Mahomed had not heard her either play or sing until that evening, and he was equally surprised and enchanted by her admirable performance of an Italian air which she gave with all the varying expression that could denote the different passions the composers of the verse and modulation had intended to convey by the force of poetry and harmony. The prince had a natural and a cultivated taste for those sister arts, and he had a soul to feel enthusiastically all the power of beauty when adorned with superior intelligence, exquisite sensibility, and superlative virtue. As he hung enraptured on the seraphic tones of Erina's voice, and the sweet melody of her harp, he marked with riveted attention the matchless symmetry of her form, the incomparable grace of her every movement as her snowy arms stretched across her splendidly decorated and gilded instrument, while her beauteous hand and roseat taper fingers sometimes swept the strings in soft arpegio glided over them in light touches in accompani-

ment to the dying cadence of her thrilling notes, or rapidly flew to strike with force full-vibrating chords of spirited harmony to the swelling tones of her clear, sweet, flexible, and commanding voice in the quick movement of her varied song; while to the changing modulation and sentiment, her eyes, her altering colour, her every feature and gesture, pourtrayed her as the muse of harmony to the prince's fancy, which was ever warmed with all the fire of enthusiastic genius, and which was now additionally animated by the most refined ardours of love. The spark of that energetic passion the beauty of Erina at the first glance of her had kindled in his heart, now became a flame which had taken too much hold of his soul to be extinguished. As absorbed in the sentiment that had taken possession of him, he gazed enraptured on Erina, her eyes caught his fixed on her with an expression impossible to be either unnoticed or misunderstood.—Whilst the prince looked the object of his attention and admiration felt the sensibility that beamed in his glances awaken the susceptibility of her heart.—A new and mixed sensation of satisfaction and uneasiness pervaded her mind, and so confused her ideas that she found some difficulty in proceeding to the conclusion of her song, which described in the strong and delicate language of the elegant dramatic bard Metas-

tasio, the ardour and purity, the hopes and fears, and the unalterable constancy of an exalted affection for a youthful prince in a virgin soul. Aware that Jaffier Mahomed was well acquainted with the words she sung, Erina blushed and trembled, while her faltring voice declared the agitation she wished anxiously to conceal: her confusion encreased from the wish to hide it.—In her heightening blushes, her down-cast looks, and tremulous voice, the vain de l'Armencour read a passion for himself, and fixing his eyes on her he smiled with encreased self-sufficiency: then glanced around with an expression of arrogance to assume the meaning of Erina's embarrassment to an involuntarily discovered affection for him; while the prince with the delicate timidity of true love, withdrew his eyes from the confused maid to lessen her visible emotion; which, with the fear inseparable from a real passion, he apprehended had not himself for its object. In averting his regards from Erina, he perceived the count surveying her with a look declarative of the pride of a favoured lover.

The song being now concluded, a circle of complimenters once more pressed round the modest Erina, who felt herself extremely abashed on meeting the eyes of the prince. By a silent

obeisance he tacitly expressed more, if possible, than in his former acknowledgment of obligation, and the beauteous countenance of the embarrassed girl was suffused with deep blushes as she smiled her thanks for the prince's commendations, which were too well expressed to be mistaken even by the diffidence which made Erina feel she had not succeeded in her last musical performance according to her wishes.—This amiable diffidence, discovered without affectation, would have rendered a very indifferent song absolutely charming; but Erina's vocal powers had never less required the engaging quality of modesty to obtain the praise of excellence in declining the least pretension to triumph in it.

Taking her seat amidst a range of young and handsome women, she unconsciously afforded a most striking proof of the pre-eminence of her charms over beauty, acknowledged even in her presence, while declared extremely inferior to that indescribable loveliness that rendered her irresistibly captivating.

The count, according to custom, took his stand behind her chair, to guard her ear from the tender nonsense a crowd of young coxcombs would

have offered as the homage of gallantry. Inattentive to that of de l'Armencour, Erina conversed with her female associates until some instrumental music and a song, performed by a French lady who had the reputation of an admirable voice and taste, silenced the company, and forced them to feel the superiority of Erina's musical talents. During this exertion of skill, which while it obtained merited applause, added fresh tributes to the wreath of Erina's celebrity by shewing how difficult it was even for great powers to follow humbly where her's led, she occasionally encountered the eyes of the prince riveted on her: apparently unmindful of the music, he had stationed himself opposite to Erina, on whom he gazed absorbed in thought; whilst she, remarking the peculiar grace of his unstudied attitude, and the sentimental expression of his fine countenance as he stood lost in abstraction, could not avoid drawing a comparison infinitely to his advantage when she turned from the interesting contemplation of his handsome face and inimitable figure, to the consideration of the men who surrounded him. The prince's commanding stature, his dignified air, his incomparably beautiful features, would have distinguished him not only as the most perfect being that could be seen in human form, but

would have sufficiently marked his princely rank to prevent its being mistaken, even had his attire not been so magnificent as to shew him born to sovereignty.

As Erina thought of his elevated station, and reflected that he was heir to a great Eastern principality, she blushed at the idea she had that evening admitted into her imagination that she had inspired him with an interest superior to that of the friendship he openly avowed for her and Rosaline. Erina severely reproached herself for permitting herself to be deceived into a foolish fancy, by a species of vanity she despised.—She experienced extreme humiliation from the reflection on her absurd notion, as she termed it, that the prince regarded her with more than common approbation; and resolved for the future never to give way to such ridiculous ideas, from the conviction that *it is equally imprudent, as it is indecorous and nonsensical, for a female heart to trust itself with a supposition of having made a conquest until it be declared, lest a dangerous prepossession in favour of an agreeable object, take root under a notion the sentiment is authorized by a congeniality of feeling; and, thus nurtured to maturity, spread itself as a*

poisonous weed difficult to be eradicated, until it lay waste the mind and become fatal, not only to peace, but the fame of virgin delicacy and female repute; which receiving the slightest stain remains irrecoverably tarnished.

" Unamiable qualities must as invariably disgust, as virtuous dispositions charm and engage the heart of sensibility."

CHAP. XIII.

AT the conclusion of the first part of the concert, the company repaired from the saloon, where the music had been performed, to the varandos where refreshments were spread. As all the apartments were heated by the innumerable lights, and the great crowd, many were tempted by the serenity of the moon-light evening, to walk into the rofreshing air of the garden. To breath the balmy gale that scattered from its wings rich fragrance, dropping from unblossomed shrubs, and flowrets steeped in dew; Erina seated herself under the colon-

nade that overlooked the river. As she watched the moon-beam trembling in the silver current, and saw the bright luminary of night surrounded by a starry train, her thoughts were led to the reflection that the same planet which shed her argentine rays on the rippling stream of the Hoogley, and on the shades around her, would spread, in a short time, softened beams over the lake that washed the shores of her native woods. The village of Glenrock, the groves of her paternal home, the antiquated walls and ivied turrets of her grandsire's mansion, rose to her mental vision. Abstracted from the present scene, her thoughts presented to imagination her family assembled in an autumnal evening round the social hearth where she had so often sported with youthful joy; she saw, in idea, her silver-headed grandsire smiling beneficence on the domestic circle, that endeavoured, by duteous cares, to cheer his hours of declining life; her mother, her brother, were pourtrayed to her view. Erina's fancy depicted a tear of maternal anxiety stealing down the pale care-faded cheek of her widowed parent, while fraternal sorrow added to pining love, stole every tint of healthful bloom from the saddened face of the once lively Charles. With the remembrance of

her brother, that of her friend Seraphina, and the amiable Wilmot, pressed on the heart of Erina a painful sensation. She thought of her brother's and Wilmot's hopeless passion for objects virtue commanded them to forget, and sighing heavily, she raised her eyes to Heaven, while, with a silent prayer, she recommended them both to Divine pity and support. As the pious girl fixed an eye of religious supplication on the firmament, in the invocation of the Great Author of all things, the full-orbed moon beamed on a tear that the ardour for absent relatives and beloved friends, had caused to spring from the fountain of tender sentiment; that tear, trembling a moment in its lustrous source, fell in lucent drops upon her snowy bosom, as it heaved a deep-drawn sigh to the fate of Charles and Wilmot, so formed to live inseparable, yet, cruelly doomed to absence from each other, by the very bonds of enthusiastic friendship which had firmly united their souls in a noble affection, that prompted each to sacrifice his own peace for the happiness of his friend.

As the pensive Erina mourned their situation, and wished her own admitted of alleviating their sorrows, her tears continued to

flow. Removed from the festive throng, who were busied in refreshing themselves, and standing or strolling about in cheerful groups, the laugh of merriment, and the hum of conversation interrupted not the reflections, checked not the tender sigh, neither repressed the tears of Erina. She flattered herself she was unseen, and indulged in that pleasing melancholy, which is a species of enjoyment to the heart of sensibility, especially when the soul softened by recent emotions, or scenes that awaken sentiment. The music she had that evening heard and performed, the view of nature veiled in the shade of night, and reposing hushed in stillness, while the moonbeams rested on the tranquil water, and the dew descending on the flowers, while they exhaled their odour to the evening freshness, all conspired to rouse in the feeling mind of Erina sensations of tender seriousness; and leaning her cheek on her hand, as her elbow rested on the balustrade of the varando, she wept in pleasing dejection, as she believed, unnoticed: but she was not unheeded as she imagined. The count, who had missed her, left the company to seek her; and perceiving her seated in a pensive attitude, he hastened to her, not to detain her apart in a private tender inter-

course, for which he had neither power nor taste, but to draw forth amidst the gay circle the admired girl, who, with himself, he conceived, would shine conspicuously, and attract, as the object of his attention, the general notice and envy it was his highest ambition to excite.

With this intention, de l'Armencour approached Erina, and calling upon her to join the company as its chief ornament, he rallied her on the sadness that had made her retire to solitude. His address was obtrusive, and his manner, ever disagreeable to her, and now particularly so, as his gaiety was entirely discordant to her present feelings, made her answer with a gravity that piqued him: yet, although offended, he was above taking a repulse, which would have wounded his pride to shew he understood as it was intended. With an air, therefore, of perfect ease and unconcern, mingled with an effrontery that totally parried the indifference of Erina, he carried his point, which her politeness prompted her yielding to. On rising to join the company, she perceived the prince standing near her—his arms were folded, and his attitude was that of a person who had been fixed in

attentive observation, while the expression of his countenance convinced Erina she hadbeen the object of his notice. In passing him she smiled, and, starting from his position of reflection, he bowed with a look so indicative of sentiment and tender interest, as to make the strongest claims on Erina's.

With her, Jaffier Mahomed rejoined the circle, which had already formed itself to attend to the music preparing to recommence as Erina entered the saloon.

In the second act of the concert, she performed a brilliant and difficult piece on the piano-forte, with inimitable execution and taste, and sung a duet with Rosaline, which was rapturously applauded as the most exquisite vocal performance. Erina's sensibility had been so powerfully called forth by the recent moments of tender recollection, and affecting retrospections, that she had never found her soul more attuned to give a touching effect to the notes of a most moving Italian *duo:* she sung from and to the heart, while the mellifluous tones of her seraphic voice, gave to the finest melody all the pathos of her soul to awaken to keenest feeling the heart of insen-

sibility itself. The attention of wonder and delight hung on her dulcet strains; and the general stilness of the breathless circle, tacitly spoke unutterable praise. Exultation sat on the proud smile of the vain count, watchful of the universal encomiums the lovely musician received from the looks of approbation, and the mute attention her angelic appearance and incomparable talents riveted on her face and voice: in the reflections of the arrogant de l'Armencour, selfish considerations and conceit superseded every sentiment for Erina; whose idea ever mingled with notions of his own consequence, so as to render self-love predominant in his interested attachment.

Near this self-sufficient lover stood the prince, lost to all recollection of himself, except the consciousnes of gazing on, and listening enamoured of the beauteous Erina. Although she could not fail observing the strong expression of emotion and rapt attention with which he heard the duet, the amiable girl so lightly appreciated her own talents in comparison with those of Rosaline, as to imagine that the powers of her friend, and the charms of the composition, more than her own exertions had pleased the prince's taste for music; and at

the conclusion of the concert, when he mentioned the delight it had afforded him, and gratified her generous nature, by enthusiastically extolling the voice, the musical science and taste of Lady Kinross, the diffident Erina felt more surprised than her friendship permitted her, to experience pleasure from the most flattering encomium, in her opinion, that could be pronounced, when Jaffier Mahomed assured her he should have believed it impossible for any musician to interest his feelings as forcibly as Lady Kinross had that evening done, had not his heart acknowledged that the lovely friend of that delightful musician possessed superior power to charm.

The manner in which this compliment was uttered, and the air with which it was addressed to Erina, united so much sincerity and tender sentiment to courtesy, as to render it impossible for her truth, her feelings, and her politeness, to doubt the homage the prince's sensibility seized this occasion of paying. With a blush of confusion, and a sensation of gratitude for the meed of praise, rather than the least exultation on her triumph over Rosaline, in the opinion of Jaffier Mahomed, Erina, smiling, told him, his highness had given her

on that evening, the first cause to question the accuracy of his judgment, and the refinement of his taste.

To this little sally of half-serious pleasantry, the prince replied, by assuring Erina, in the same tone of playfulness, that, although it grieved him sensibly to forfeit any thing in her opinion, where he was ambitious of holding the highest place, he owed it to sincerity, and the regard he had to correct taste, to express the judgment he had formed. "You must surely acquit me of the least design to flatter you," added the prince, smiling—"for I was sensible," he continued, "I should most have gratified your liberal disposition in allowing your friend, Lady Kinross, excelled you."

Tables being now spread in the adjoining room, the numerous company sat down to an elegant supper, laid out with equal taste and and expedition. At the principal table, where Rosaline presided, the prince was seated at her right hand, in compliment to his dignity. At the second board, the lovely Erina did the honours of the banquet with peculiar grace; while the viscount and de l'Armencour, at his

request, attended to the guests at the other tables.

As the count was delegated to perform part of the honours of the entertainment, he could only pay an occasional compliment to Erina; who, rejoicing in his being thus diverted from his usual attentions to her, felt her spirits lightened by the sensation of ease which his assiduities never failed to check. As she paid the courtesies of conviviality to the circle where she presided, her eyes sparkled with vivacity, her cheeks glowed with the spirit of benevolence, and the smile of innocent freedom dimpling round her ruby lips, rendered her enchantingly beautiful, while the engaging air of elegant urbanity with which she addressed particular civilities to each of her company, fascinated the hearts of all.

The prince, from his station near her, watched with an eye of admiration, her every look and gesture; his attentive ear caught each word she uttered, and his whole soul was absorbed in rapturous contemplation of her incomparable loveliness.

Erina, on her part, was observant of her

friend Rosaline's princely guest. The digified, yet easy, politeness of his address to all the company, the courteous assiduities he paid his noble entertainer, Lady Kinross, and the flattering attentions he, every moment, shewed Erina, impressed her with an increased opinion of his amiable dispositions. She remarked that he partook of the simplest viands of the costly entertainment, accepting of them entirely as an act of civility rather than an inclination to enjoy the delicacies of the sumptuous feast which had been given in compliment to him. In helping Rosaline and Erina to wine, he requested they would excuse his declining to drink any of it to their health, according to the European custom, as his religion obliged him to abstain from the expressed juice of the grape: and while the two fair friends applauded his strict observance of a law they venerated, instead of disapproving, they could not forbear secretly regretting he was not a professor of Christianity, to which the purity of his morals, and the firmness of his principles, would have done so much higher honour than it receives from the lives of many who, acknowledging the true faith of a blessed Redeemer, are less spiritualized by his righteous commands and pure doctrines, than the

very pagans themselves, who have no better light than that of nature, to tell them of a Divinity, of whose revealed will they are totally ignorant.

When the company were breaking up to retire, and while the count, as the assistant of de Briançon, was employed in handing the ladies to their carriages and palanquins, which are a kind of sedan chairs used in India, the prince, leaning over the back of a sofa on which Erina had seated herself apart from the departing crowd, in gentlest accents aspirated a wish, that the softest slumbers, and most pleasing dreams might prevent the fatigues, her exertions on that night must have occasioned, leaving any disagreeable consequences.

Erina, smiling, thanked the prince for his kind wishes; assuring him, with as much sincerity as gaiety, that she never experienced weariness in exerting herself to pay attention to her friends.

"I am sensible, lady," resumed Jaffier Mahomed, in a tone of unusual softness, "that your anxious desires to make all around you happy, prevent your feeling wearied by your

amiable solicitude for their entertainment; yet, I noticed your retiring this evening for a short respite from the bustle of company, which I perceived had exhausted that charming flow of spirits that is ever the joy of the circle you honour with your presence."

The peculiarly tender interest of countenance, voice, and manner, with which this speech was uttered, and the affecting recollections it awakened in the feeling mind of Erina, caused her to heave a sigh to the remembrance of past times, and absent friends, while a roseat glow, mantling to suffuse her cheeks with a deeper tint, and the humid lustre of sensibility beaming from her eyes, gave to her countenance that indescribable touching effect which inspires the heart of sentiment with congenial emotion. Admiration and sympathy expressed themselves eloquently in every feature of the prince, while he gazed on Erina with increased interest, as he marked the sigh and tear his observation occasioned—he himself sighed from agitation, and coloured deeply, at the consciousness of having given a sensation of pain.

The delicate sensibility of Erina quickly

read in the expressive countenance of Jaffier Mahomed, the embarassment he experienced in having thus unexpectedly discovered, as he now believed, a secret grief lurking in a heart he had believed at ease; and in order to dispel the concern he evinced, she resumed a smile of cheerfulness, telling the prince that amidst all the pleasures and valued friends that surrounded her, she could not help, occasionally giving regrets to her absence from her native land, and beloved relations. "The remembrance of my revered grandfather, my adored mother, my tenderly loved brother, and other friends, to whom I am affectionately attached," continued Erina, sighing as she spoke, "beguiled me this evening, as is frequently the case, of some moments of gaiety. I yielded to the indulgence of some serious reflections which the circumstances around me inspired; but I returned with pleasure, believe me," she added, bowing to the prince, "to a scene which I enjoyed, and to a circle of acquaintance whose society is calculated to console, instead of wearying me."

A ray of joy beamed from the expressive eyes of Jaffier Mahomed, on the reflection that he was amongst the circle of her acquaint-

ance, whose society was calculated to console instead of wearying her. He mentally repeated this to himself innumerable times, while he kept his station near the charming maid.

The moments of private conversation with the object of his adoration, were but few, as a crowd of young men, according to custom, pressed round the universally adulated Erina; kind as beautiful, beautiful as amiable, amiable as gay, and gay as innocent; she, unassuming as she was, devoid of vanity or coquetry, had an equally polite attention to each who addressed her; and gave to all a smile of gracious courtesy. Those smiles the prince noticed with anxious solicitude, to mark if, amongst the train that courted her, there was one favoured above the rest.——Affable to all, he saw her not particular to any; and his fluttering heart became more tranquil, till, on the approach of the Count de l'Armencour, he felt his apprehensions of a rival strengthen.

The self-sufficient, familiar manner of that constant attendant on Erina, had frequently raised a suspicion in the mind of Jaffier Mahomed, that the count might be an accepted lover; and the assured and easy tone with which

de l'Armencour now addressed the object of the prince's solicitude disgusted, while it confirmed him in the opinion that Erina was engaged to a man most unworthy of her, as he appeared less impressed than he ought to be, by the matchless charms of the rich prize, perhaps, destined for him.

Jaffier Mahomed had a mind as delicate as his nature was ardent; his soul was formed with energetic feelings; but he had an understanding sufficiently vigorous to controul the strongest passions; and although his heart was susceptible of a love that he was sensible might lead him to distraction, he resolved, in the height of his admiration and affection, never to permit his attachment to gain an ascendancy over his reason. Thus determined, he formed the purpose of investigating clearly the inclinations of Erina, before he declared his passion; for his ideas were too refined, and his sensibility too acute, to permit his addressing the most perfect of women, until he had ascertained beyond all doubt, that he had excited in her bosom sentiments congenial to those he experienced. That he possessed the esteem of Erina, her ingenuous conduct towards him sufficiciently declared—That she

regarded him with gratitude, and even with the most flattering friendship, he had received testimonies that prevented his diffidence entertaining any doubt. Gratified as he felt by this belief, he yet desired more than the anxiety, the apprehensions, the timidity of an ardent passion allowed him to hope. To be beloved by Erina, with a tenderness equal to that with which she had inspired him, could alone satisfy him. To gain her affections, and assure himself of possessing them, he determined to attempt, in case she were not already engaged to the Count de l'Armencour; and with all the ardour of his energetic character, and all the anxiety of a first youthful and enthusiatic passion, the prince bent the whole force of his mind, and the power of his imagination, to ascertain Erina's situation respecting the count, and the state of her heart relative to himself.

With the keen eye of a lover, Jaffier Mahomed scrutinized the looks and manner of Erina towards de l'Armencour, and nothing but the fear naturally attendant on the anxious passion that agitated the bosom of the prince, could have induced him to suppose the count might prove a a successful rival.

Of all the men who gazed upon, and followed Erina with admiration, the Asiatic youth was least the object of jealousy to de l'Armencour; for although the prince was fair as an European, and superlatively handsome, the count was too vain of his own person, and had much too high an opinion of his own attractions, to imagine himself surpassed, either in figure or in manners, by Jaffier Mahomed, and was far from suspecting that his taste and intentions, differing essentially from all of his country and religion, led him to abhor Mahometan licentiousness, and to devote himself to one object of constant affection.

Although a native of Hindostan, and the heir of a principality in that country, the prince of Azimabad, from birth and education, was totally unlike all the Eastern sovereigns.—Through a succession of illustrious ancestors, he traced his descent from Tamerlane; who, reflecting as much brilliancy on the Mogul throne, as he derived from its splendor, left a wide extended and flourishing empire amongst a numerous posterity.

The father of Jaffier Mahomed was a man of uncommon abilities and virtues, and reigned

over a state in the most fertile part of the territory of India. Early in life he became enamoured of a beautiful and amiable young Spanish lady, who had been taken to the East by her friends: Won by his assiduities, she bestowed her hand on the possessor of her virgin affections, who married her according to the rites of her religion, and the ceremony of his own country. Constant from inclination and principle, the father of Jaffier Mahomed abandoned the pleasures of a seraglio, for the purer enjoyments he experienced in fidelity to the object of a chaste attachment. Of several children which were the fruit of this virtuous and uncommon union, Jaffier Mahomed alone survived to combine in his mind and person every Asiatic and European beauty, grace, and virtue, in the highest perfection.

In his principles and life a Christian, although a professor of the Mahometan religion, Jaffier Mahomed, from his boyhood, had resolved to make his revered and affectionate parents the models of his conduct: from the example of his mother's sweetness of manner and disposition, he imbibed all the soft graces that adorned the firm character of manly virtues his father's precepts had formed. Ami-

able by nature, good from principle, engagingly gracious in disposition, and elegantly courteous by education—gentle, brave, informed, sensible, and virtuous in every respect in the highest degree; Jaffier Mahomed was the most finished prince, the best soldier, the most cultivated scholar, and the most admirable being, he controuled the most powerful feelings by the strongest understanding: and refined in his sentiments as he was correct in his judgment; he had determined to act as his father had done in the choice of a single female companion, to whom he might devote himself for life, with constancy, and a reliance on a mutual affection and fidelity. His mother's beauty, accomplishments, and mental qualities, so superior to those which the education of the Eastern women required or cultivated, had made the prince of Azimabad anxious to find a European virgin whom his understanding would approve, while his heart attached itself in indissoluble bonds. Amongst the fair sex of every country he had an opportunity of seeing, he most admired the exterior character of the British ladies; and amongst the most admired of that nation, his judicious taste had selected Erina as the object of adoration. To obtain the most charming of her

sex, and her who had first awakened in his bosom the pure passion of a tender and enthusiastic affection, became the ardent desire of Jaffier Mahomed. Yet, ardently as he loved Erina, distracted as he felt the loss of her would render him, he was too delicate and romantic in his sentiments of love to form the slightest wish of posseessing the object of his adoration without gaining her heart entirely—to awaken in it a tenderness animated as his own was pure, or to pine an unconnected being through life, should he meet with the slightest disappointment in this first wish of his soul, was the intention of the prince; who, agitated by all the nameless apprehension and innumerable anxieties of a romantically empassioned lover, remained unsuspected as such by the count, although a jealous pretender to Erina's favour, less vain than de l'Armencour might have perceived a dangerous rival in the superlatively handsome, and fascinatingly interesting illustrious youth.

The company, being at length, dispersed, and the hour far advanced, Jaffier Mahomed and the count were obliged to retire. The latter left the object of his desires with a familiar bow, to think of himself instead of

Erina, while the prince, after paying a salutation, in which the tenderest sentiment was most elegantly expressed, withdrew to reckon impatiently the moments of his absence from the dearest treasure of his heart, and to ponder restlessly on the means of gaining the high prize for which he purposed to become a candidate.

The lovely object of his anxiety retired in the meanwhile to her chamber, to reflection and repose.

Quickly unrobed by her black attendant Silvia, whom Rosaline had appointed to wait upon her, Erina, according to custom, dispatched her maid to rest in an adjoining dressing-room, and opened her bible and prayer-book to read, pray, and meditate seriously, as she invariably did every night before she lay down to sleep. Having performed her orisons, and perused the sacred volume, by the standard of whose pure laws she regulated her conduct, and having examined strictly, as she was each night wont to do, whether her every action and thought had been regulated by the holy word which she daily studied, Erina felt herself composed by conscious rectitude, and her

thoughts sublimed by piety to that state of placid felicity innocence ever must experience.

Having extinguished her light, the moonbeams streaming through her windows, threw round her chamber a softened ray of silver radiance that disposed the mind to reflection. Erina drew near the window of the bow that overlooked the river; its current glided peacefully along, glittering to the bright orb that tipped with argent each tuft of the surrounding woods, while the sombre shadows of the spreading trees threw a gloom beneath their boughs. Nature hushed to rest seemed to sleep in the bosom of silence; and the mind of Erina, tranquil as the night was serene, enjoyed the profound stillness and peace that reigned around. Her soul on the wings of pious reflection, soared to the celestial throne, whence all blessings flow, and as she mentally bent in adoration of that supreme power which created and sustains the wondrous universe, she raised her eyes to contemplate the supposed suns of other systems, guessed at by human reason: through the wide expanse of the thickly star-studded æther, her mind grasped at a faint conception of space unbounded—and there, lost in wonder as in awe, she contracted her

thoughts from immensity, immeasurable by human intellect, to the consideration of the globe she inhabited: on a comparison with endless space, how short seemed the distance from pole to pole, what a trifle the measure of the degrees which separated her from her native land? Yet alas! how distant did she think herself from her paternal home! How far removed from her beloved relations! A rising sigh and a tear accompanied this idea; and she retired to bed, not to pass in review the festivities of the evening, not to reflect on the adulation she had received, but to think and dream of her loved country; thither transported in idea, fancy associated her with her grandsire, mother, and brother; to them, in her dream, she related the events that had intervened in absence from them; to them she recounted the kindnesses she had received since she parted from them; amongst those testimonies of friendship which had consoled her in her separation from her relatives, the cares of the oft remembered Elise, the sisterly assiduities af the tenderly regarded Rosaline, the esteem of the amiable Wilmot so flatteringly expressed, with innumerable favours of other individuals that had impressed themselves on the memory of the grateful Erina, were enu-

merated in imagination, as her vision represented the wished re-union with her family; amongst the number of her obligations, her preservation by the prince was remembered with enthusiasm, while the joy she experienced in being restored, by the magic of sleeping allusion, to her paternal home and relations, was troubled by the idea of never again beholding her gallant deliverer, the interesting Jaffier; and the agitation this painful idea occasioned, awakened Erina from a dream of mingled pleasure and uneasiness.

The dawn had already dispelled the shades of night, and nature refreshed, bloomed in gayest beauty to a brilliant sun, while every tree, shrub, flower, and herb, glistened with dew-drops around the sylvan dwelling inhabited by Erina. Rising, according to custom, at early morn', she dressed herself in a snow-white robe of fine muslin, and binding up her glossy auburn tresses in the grecian manner, like the eastern women, she threw over her head a long transparent veil, in colour and texture similar to her gown, and enveloped herself with its soft flowing drapery in the asiatic mode. This fanciful and picturesque dress she assumed to guard her from the cool

air of the early hour, which at that season of the year in India is chilly, until the sun, mounting to his meridian altitude, warms the atmosphere to summer heat, even in the coldest weather

Finding Rosaline had not yet left her chamber, Erina strolled into the garden, where the gale stole rich perfumes from each shrub and flowret steeped in dew. The mindi hedges exhaled their fragrance to the air; the strong odour of the snowy bale-flower, and the sweet scent of the chumpalk, hanging like yellow tulips from the pale-green stems of broad-leaved over-arching trees, loaded the breath of morning with aromatic sweetness; while as Erina walked under the shade of the spreading bocul, showers of its fragrant blossoms bestrewed and scented the path she trod, where innumerable buds of every hue impearled with dew-drops, gave odoriferous freshness to the balmy zephyrs.

As Erina passed through the embowering alleys, sweet warbling birds on every spray saluted the rising day; the breeze in gentle whispers stole over the rustling shades, and the swiftly gliding current of the river softly

murmured as the wind waved the tall slender stems of the cocoa-nut, palm, and date trees that nodded over the stream.

To take a view of the beautiful Hoogley, Erina walked to the terrace and stood some time absorbed in admiration of its meandering course. On looking towards the house she perceived the breakfast table spread in the varando, but seeing neither de Briançon nor Rosaline had yet made their appearance, and not observing any sign of their having entered their dressing rooms, as the windows were thrown wide open, Erina went into the octagon temple, and seated herself on the steps leading down to the river, where she often took a station of solitary contemplation. Here as she marked the passing boats rowed and guided by the natives in their different dresses, she took a pencil and small sketch-book, which she generally carried about in her lonely rambles, and began to delineate some figures of the asiatics in their hindoo and moorish habits. As the most elegant sample of the latter, she drew the form and attire of Jaffier Mahomed such as he had appeared on the preceding night.

To natural genius, in the art of designing, Erina united science improved by constant practice in making draughts of every object which struck her fancy; by this means she had acquired a facility in taking exact resemblances of every thing she made the subject of her pencil, that in masterly touches delineated now at the command of imagination a striking likeness of a figure, and also of a countenance which had made the srongest impression on her mind.—True to remembrance, Erina's hand traced the graceful form, and each expressive feature of the prince, with a spirit and exactness that genius, aided by minute observation of an interesting object, could alone have given. Long occupied in the execution of a portrait that engaged her deepest attention, she laid aside her pencil to contemplate her work, and holding it to her views with a look of exultation, she was examining and re-examining an exquisitely touched and really charming likeness, when she perceived the original of the admired picture standing behind her!

Surprised, confused, but not displeased, Erina started up; and addressing the prince with a blushing smile, she saluted him, requesting

to know how long his highness had been there, and apologizing for her inattention in not having noticed the entrance of an illustrious visitor; excused herself by saying she had been quite absorbed by a very favourite and most interesting employment?

The innocent and artless girl, uttering with her accustomed sincerity the truth she knew no cause to conceal, was not aware of the whole fact, she had unintentionally fully explained. The prince, however, was too diffident to seize the full meaning of what Erina said; had he understood it in the most flattering sense, into which it might have borne an interpretation he was too delicate to have evinced it, even in an indirect manner, by shewing the delight he experienced in having discovered himself to be so much the object of Erina's observation and thoughts as to become the subject of her pencil: infinitely as he felt flattered by such an incontestible evidence, of having been in the remembrance and reflection of the being he idolized, and whom it was his first wish to interest deeply; the prince was not emboldened to push farther the discovery, to which the circumstances might naturally have led, even

without any approach to impertinent obtrusion. Contenting himself merely with a cursory glance at the sketch-book, which Erina closed on perceiving him, and in which he had been too much absorbed in admiration of her enchanting figure, whilst she was drawing, to examine accurately his own which he saw her delineating; the prince assured the blushing, smiling girl, he should not have dared to approach her with an intention of being a secret spy upon her actions. "Drawn hither, lady," continued the youth with unpresumptuous gallantry, "by a strong desire to learn how you and your amiable friend found yourselves after the fatiguing exertions of the preceding night; I was directed by the attendants to seek you in your morning walk: not finding you in any of the paths you are accustomed to frequent in the garden, I directed my steps to this temple in search of you; and should certainly have paid my homage of salutation on entering, had I not perceived you engaged with a pencil. From my anxiety not to interrupt you, lady, whilst occupied in an elegant art, from which you derive agreeable amusement, I trust you will not condemn me as impolite, in delaying my obeisance until you were at

leisure to receive it, nor consider me impertinent in venturing to overlook the productions of your genius, from the exertions of which I have been accustomed to receive infinite delight."

Erina, fully sensible of the prince's delicacy, in waving the subject of his discovery instead of presuming on it, felt it requisite to account for her having thought of drawing the resemblance she was assured he must have recognized as his own, and informing him she had employed her pencil in delineating the various picturesque dresses of India, she had attempted to make a sketch of the habit his highness wore on the preceding evening as the most elegant sample of the Asiatic attire; and turning over the several leaves of her drawing-book, on which she had been employed that morning, she requested the prince would do her the favour to correct any inaccuracies he might perceive in the *costume* as she wished it to be exact. "I always draw every picturesque object that strikes me as beautiful," continued Erina with innocent candour; "and the dress your highness last night appeared in, I particularly ad-

mired as equally becoming and sumptuous."

Saying this, the artless girl, with a modest grace, presented the likeness of Jaffier Mahomed to him, soliciting his criticism.

Pleased at the compliment, yet embarrassed by this appeal to his judgment, the prince assured Erina, the only criticism that could be made on all her performances, was to commend them as exquisitely executed: and that with respect to the drawing she had done him the honour to submit to his opinion, he could only say, her taste had given a grace to the dress which made it appear to him more elegant than he had ever thought it. The prince then reverting to the other sketches in Erina's book, experienced an indescribable sentiment of pleasure in perceiving that none of the figures she had taken, were traced with that care and exquisite delicacy of touch and finishing, which had evidently been bestowed on the delineation of his likeness.—There was a degree of gratification in the species of flattery, which, even the timidity of a diffident lover, and the modesty of Jaffier Mahomed could not fail to consider as en-

couraging. Hope, such as springs in a youthful bosom, devoted to a first ardent passion, expanded the heart of the prince to joy, that those only can know, who have experienced like him, the bright dawn of happy expectation in the infancy of an enthusiastic love.

He would have kissed the fair hand of the beautiful artist, which had paid him the compliment of sketching his resemblance from memory, with such flattering exactness, and with such spirit and attention, as plainly evinced a delicate interest of the heart, had aided her genius in each touch of the pencil —He would have thrown himself prostrate, in gratitude, before her, for this proof she had afforded him, of his being remembered by her in absence.—He would have thanked her for thus encouraging him to hope, that the homage of his tender assiduities, might in time move her to reward the ardour of his soul, by the affection of hers; but the reverence her virgin modesty impressed, on his delicacy of sentiment, checked the effusion of passion her beauty inspired; and returning with a trembling hand the book she had presented for his inspection, the prince expressed, only by a profound obeisance, the

sensations that repressed all utterance, while the language of his looks, was sufficient to explain most eloquently, infinitely more than he would in a first declaration have ventured to divulge.

As Erina's quick penetration, perused in the glances of his eyes, in the deepened glow of his colour, and in the expression of his air, a powerful emotion for which she knew no cause, she caught from his agitation an uneasiness, quite new to her, and for which she was unable to account. Troubled at she knew not what, and confused she knew not why, her embarrassment became evident in downcast looks, heightening blushes, and a timidity of manner different from that modest frankness which ever heretofore had distinguished her address, as innocently free, as she was chastely decorous.

The prince perceiving her confusion, with the quick-sighted eye of an observant lover, felt the tumultuous sensations attendant on an ardent passion, when new-born hope inspires the youthful breast with an ecstatic joy. Suppressing, however, any expression of his feelings, that might add to the embarrassment of

maiden reserve, he delicately turned the conversation, from personal application, to the theme of nature; and speaking of the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and the fineness of the season, he restored to Erina her usual ease by affording her an opportunity of discoursing on a subject ever interesting to her; for her mind was always impressed, in so lively a manner by the charms of nature, it was ever agreeable to her to expatiate on the pleasure her sensibility received from the beauties of delightful scenery. With equal taste and enthusiasm she dwelt on the consideration of the view before her. The meandering current of the majestic Hoogley, carrying a portion of the pure stream of the Ganges, as a tribute to the ocean, whose waves flowed from pole to pole, washing every shore of the globe in the circulation of its tides, carried her thoughts to distant countries and her native land; while softened by the recollection of her paternal home, her sensibility became more keenly susceptible, and her heart more deeply touched by the surrounding scenery. The wide extent of level country, on the opposite side of the river, where amidst unbounded plains of rice grounds, eastern edi-

fices rose under interspersed plantations of coca-nut, palm, and date trees: the winding stream of the Hoogley, covered with Indian barks, and barges manned by Asiatics; the adjacent shades of embowering bamboo, tamarind, orange, lemon, pomegranate, plantain, mango, and the enormous banian and jack fruit tree; each herb, blossom, shrub, and flower, expanding to the radiance of a morning sun, whose brilliant beam displayed the effulgence of the torrid zone; the sensation produced by the air, as its breath scattered the balmy perfumes of the east; even the warble of the birds, so different from every note chanted by the feathered choristers of european woods: all that surrounded Erina, impressing on her reflection the immense distance from home, affected her heart, whilst it awakened her to that kind of interest, a pleasing novelty never fails to inspire in an observant mind.

Her language, ever true to her feelings, on this occasion expressed with elegant energy, the sensations excited by a situation calculated to call forth all the sensibility that characterized her as the child of sentiment. As the mellifluous tones of Erina's voice de-

clared the susceptibility of her mind: Jaffier Mahomed's expanded with congenial feeling, while his enquiring eyes read in the humid radiance of her's that self-expression, which, declaring the heart deeply affected, moves a congenial soul to that sympathy, which excites the tenderest affections, united with the most powerful interest. With such warmth of sympathy, with the gentlest ardours of the most enthusiastic and pure passion, and with the most animated interest, did the enamoured prince gaze on the beauteous Erina, as he stood beside her on the banks of the Hoogley, enjoying enraptured her presence at the early hour of morn, when amidst sylvan scenes, the heart of youth touched with a chaste and ardent flame, feels the purest ecstacies of love.

The soft murmur of the rapidly flowing river; the sound of oars dashing in the water, as the passing boats approached, and receded from the temple that overhung the stream; the embowering shades that surrounded this sequestered retreat, and the rustling of the umbrageous foliage as the breeze gently fanned in sighing whispers the waving branches of the trees; all conspired to encrease the

prince's enchantment, whilst he riveted his looks on Erina's form and face. United to the exquisite symmetry of her figure, incomparable elegance gave its fascinating charms to her air, and grace, lent all its magical effect to her every gesture; whilst in each feature perfect beauty adorned with the dazzling brilliancy of freshest youth, the finest glow of health heightened by the blushes of virgin modesty, and the most touching expression of sensibility irradiating her countenance, rendered her an object, such as idolatry might worship, as celestial.

In the soft languor of tender recollections, Erina in silence fixed her tearful eyes on the prospect around, and sighed to the remembrance of absent relatives and friends. In the tumultuous sensations of an enthusiastically empassioned lover, the prince riveting his gaze on the maid of his affections, was absorbed by the contemplation of her alone. From these affecting reveries in which Erina indulged; from this ecstatic delirum into which love plunged the youthful prince, they were aroused by the sudden entrance of the gay de Briançcon; who accosting,

Erina and her illustrious companion with his accustomed politeness and vivacity, informed his highness he was sent on an embassy to summon them to breakfast.

The laughing cheerfulness of the viscount, called the smile of courtesy into the fine countenance of Jaffier Mahomed; and as he gracefully motioned to Erina to lead the way to her friend, who was waiting their approach at the breakfast table spread in the varando, to which with elegant playfulness, she beckoned the trio advancing down the broad verdant avenue, that conducted from the terrace at the river side to the villa, Erina's lovely face reflected the smile of gaiety that beamed from the countenance of each of her friends.

After an interchange of salutations, equally she result and testimony of politeness and sincere friendship, which lend charms to each other and render social intercourse delightful, the party took their seats at the breakfast table. Here, according to custom, Erina presided; as she served the illustrious guest with tea, and reached her snowy hands to help the prince to cream and sugar from rich antique vasses of embossed plate, the beauty

of her figure, and the grace of her attitudes, set off by the picturesque elegance of her becoming attire, as the soft folds of her white transparent veil shewed the contour of her matchless shape, and the incomparable outline and colour of her neck, and tastefully braided hair, struck with admiration, ever awakened by the endless variety of her charms, the eyes of all present; which were constantly fixed upon her by the unstudied exhibition of some new grace of look and gesture.

Whilst Rosaline, with the exultation of generous friendship, watched the enraptured glances of the prince, she smiled on Erina, and complimented her on the choice of the asiatic veil which admirably suited her. "I think with your friend," cried de Briançon gaily, "that the moorish attire becomes you to a miracle, my dear Erina. I must, therefore, in future call you *la belle Indienne;* and request you to retain the eastern dress. Perhaps, his highness, the prince, will join his entreaties to mine, in order to persuade you to lead the fashion for european ladies to adopt the habit of the women of this country."

This little complimentary speech, suffused the cheeks of Erina, with a deeper glow of roseat bloom arising at the idea of attracting particular observation: combined with this feeling of youthful bashfulness, a reflection suggested itself to her modesty, that in continuing the dress that had drawn upon her so much attention and compliment, she might be suspected of coquetry. Confused at the painful apprehension of incurring such a suspicion, she assured the company she had merely adopted the covering she wore, in imitation of the Indians, as an easy and convenient mode of wrapping herself sufficiently warm to take a morning solitary walk. "I thought," added Erina, with a blushing smile which expressed truth and innocence, in a manner equally convincing as it was engaging, "that a hat and shawl would be a heavy encumbrance in the exercise I intended to take; and as I did not expect the pleasure of so early a visit as your highness honoured us with," she continued bowing to the prince, "I had no idea of being seen by company so muffled." Thus saying, she threw off the veil, which the freshness of the morning air had prevented her laying aside when she sat down to breakfast.

Whilst Erina was divesting herself of the light drapery, which even in taking off, gave the most picturesque effect to her beautiful figure, whilst each movement displayed a new grace, the volatile de Briançon, laughingly, accused her of caprice, and in a tone of pleasantry, assured the prince Erina meant to convince them, she was equally charming in all characters and every dress. The lively Rosaline, smiled at this little sally of the viscount's high spirits. Erina herself, with her usual sweetness, joined in a good-humoured laugh of de Briançon; whilst the prince too deeply enamoured to pay a compliment that might be construed as a piece of commonplace politeness, which uttered without much meaning is taken as the mere ceremony of civility, with a silent smile tacitly commended the viscount's jest, then looked at Erina with a resumed serious air, that declared to every one but herself how much he idolized her.

Ignorant as de Briançon and Rosaline were of the prince's intentions, and unsuspicious as they were that his inclination and the wish of his parents led him, in opposition to the manners of his country and the licence

of his religion, to offer the serious vows of his heart to an european lady, with the resolution of uniting himself to her with the strictest fidelity, yet, neither the viscount nor Lady Kinross could avoid remarking the devotion Jaffier Mahomed paid their lovely charge. Considering, however, the prince's assiduities as a mere tribute of temporary gallantry, which evinced the elegance of his taste, they esteemed him higher for each proof of enthusiastic admiration of their beloved Erina; and feeling for him the sincerest friendship, they testified it by every means in their power, constantly courting his company, not only as the most agreeable acquisition and honour, but as a tribute of polite attention and gratitude due to the courtesy of the illustrious youth, and the amiable preserver of Erina.

The consideration of that lovely girl, for the prince was also evinced in a manner so decided and delicately flattering, as to render his visits extremely delightful to him; and might have encouraged him to hope he was particularly pleasing to the object of his love, had not that love rendered him timid, in proportion to the encreasing ardour of his passion, and had not the apprehensions attend-

ant on anxious affection, persuaded his diffidence, that the regard Erina had for him, originated only from her sense of obligation to him, which her amiable dispositions, prompted her constantly to acknowledge by her conduct as much as in her language.

The cordial reception he always met with at the villa, and the intimate footing on which he had for some time been with each of the family, induced him latterly to encrease the number and length of his visits, and prevented his presence being a constraint on any of the party. Finding a greater reluctance than he had ever before experienced, to leave the fascinating company of Erina, the prince could not bring himself to quit the circle after breakfast. Pleased to detain a companion whose conversation was always charming, Rosaline requested her illustrious visitor would favour her and Erina with his society, until the viscount returned from Chandenagore, where business demanded his presence that morning. "My friend and I will exert ourselves, to prevent your highness finding the time tedious," cried Lady Kinross, sweetly smiling with her accustomed vivacity; whilst Erina's expressive countenance, declared her

usual readiness to second every effort Rosaline made to entertain the prince. With a graceful bow, and a look declarative of infinitely more than language could have power to convey, he assured the two lovely friends, he should feel himself so superlatively happy in their presence, that hours would fly like moments, and he should think his stay in their society too short to whatever length it might be protracted.

In answer to their speech, sincere as it was courteous, de Briançon told the prince he would hasten back as soon as possible to rejoin the party which he quitted with regret; then taking leave of Jaffier Mahomed, the viscount solicited the honour of his highness' company to dinner, to compensate for the privation of that conversation his absence for the morning obliged him to forego, and having obtained the prince's promise of his spending the day at the villa de Briançon sat off for town.

At the entreaty of their visitor, Rosaline and Erina performed some vocal and instrumental music; after which at his desire Lady Kinross took up her embroidery and her

lovely companion sat down to the easel, whilst the prince, at Erina's request, translated to them some pieces of Persian poetry that he had brought to shew them the style of eastern writing. The subjects of the verses, selected by Jaffier Mahomed, as samples of Asiatic literature, of which Erina had expressed a wish to know something, were tender; the sentiments were delicate, noble, and natural, and expressed in the most touching manner, and the imagery and epithets which the poet had chosen to represent and adorn his ideas and feelings, were strikingly bold, and occasionally sublime. These compositions the prince translated into English, with a facility and grace that evinced he possessed equal science and genius. To the knowledge of a scholar, he added, that superior polish of mind, the best education can give to transcendant abilities alone, which, evinced unassumingly in all he did, and in every thing he said, rendered him equally pleasing as he was brilliant. The glowing and appropriate language he always employed in the delivery of his thoughts, the modulation of his voice, the expression of his countenance, and the grace of his action made him so strikingly eloquent, that the most trivial subject on which he con-

versed, could not fail of being impressive; and he had never appeared so interesting to Erina, as translating the Persian verses; when to all the spirit and tenderness of the poet, Jaffier Mahomed added his own genius and delicacy. Pleased with the judiciously selected examples of oriental literature, Erina's taste was more charmed by this new display of the amiable prince's accomplishments; for, on the subject of poetry, she found that his knowledge was as profound, as his judgment was correct. Having read the first Latin, English, French, Italian, and Spanish authors, with all the eastern productions of chief note, his conversation on the theme of versification, shewed he possessed as much poetical taste, as extensive information: and on Rosaline's telling him, she was certain he himself was a poet, he modestly confessed, he had attempted the art he enthusiastically admired, and at the united solicitations of Lady Kinross and Erina, was prevailed upon to promise them a sight of some verses he had made.

From the warm encomiums they bestowed on the pieces he had read to them, he seized an occasion to speak of the beauty of the Persian language, and on Erina's expressing

a wish to know something of it, the prince earnestly recommended it to her study, and offered to become her instructor. In reply to this proposal, the amiable girl assured him, she already considered herself too deeply indebted to the benevolent and polite exertions of his highness, to put his kindness and courtesy to farther trials: but he declaring himself infinitely obliged by acknowledgments that far exceeded his services, told Erina, her continuing to accept them, would confer additional favours; and urged her so pressingly to permit his having the honour of instructing a pupil, whose abilities would reflect such credit on him, that she had little inclination to reject a civility offered her in so peculiarly polite a manner, as to render its acceptance an indispensable courtesy, rather than a submission to receive an obligation.

In occupations and conversation, equally elegant, amusive, and improving, the hours of the morning flew on pleasure's rapid wing: and de Briançon's return home, unexpectedly announced to the deeply engaged trio, that the day was far advanced.

Dinner being shortly after served and con-

cluded, Rosaline and Erina retired, according to the modes of India, to take an hour's repose, and dress for their evening's airing, and reception of their visitors; who every night assembled, without any particular invitation, to form a social circle, in which conversation and supper for a large company, who met without any ceremony, afforded rational and convivial entertainment.

On separating after dinner, the prince requested Erina to lend him a volume of Metastatio; adding, in a tone that expressed tender sentiments rather than complimentary gallantry, that as he seldom indulged in the custom of sleeping in the evenings, and was then less inclined to it than ever, he should be in need of some interesting occupation to prevent his feeling in its full force the regrets her absence must inspire; and that if any thing could divert him from melancholy till again blessed with her presence, it must be a book of her recommendation.

Erina had been too much habituated to the language of adulation, to be surprised at this complimentary address; but there was something in the manner of it so particularly striking,

and at the same time so extremely engaging that she could not help feeling an impression she had never yet experienced from the most encomiastic speech that had been made to her. A sentiment of gratification, of pleasure almost amounting to delight, touched her heart, suffused her cheek with a glowing sensation, and made her eyes sparkle with joy, while a sweet smile of sportive gaiety dimpling round her lips, spoke an engaging readiness to comply with the request of the prince; and without calling his sincerity in question, she flew to her library, and selecting her favourite volume of the admired poet, she presented it to Jaffier Mahomed, playfully expressing her wish, that he might have every regret dissipated by the charms of Metastasio's genius.

Having retired to her chamber, and thrown on a loose dress in which she slept, she felt no inclination to repose, notwithstanding the fatigues of the preceding night, and her early rising that morning after a very few hour's rest. Taking up a book, therefore, she seated herself at her bow-window, overlooking the river, and alternately read and contemplated the beautiful prospect on the banks of the Hoogley. In spite, however, of the charm-

ing views of sylvan scenery around her, and the interesting author she perused, her thoughts wandered from the page and scene to themes in which the prince became a principal object. Combined with her obligations to him, which were frequently the subject of her reflections, his increasing assiduities, his daily new-discovered talents, accomplishments, and virtues, passed in review, and discovered to her a mutual growing interest, the idea of which confusedly pleased and alarmed her.

In the midst of these perplexing, yet fascinating reveries, wherein vague notions of mingled pain and delight flitted through her unsettled fancy; Silvia entered her dressing-room to remind Erina it was time to prepare for their evening airing. Obedient to this summons to the toilette, she applied herself with more haste and attention than usual, to its cares, and in a short time, was most becomingly attired to appear amongst her friends.

Repairing to the front verando, she found the prince alone: for Rosaline was still in her chamber, and de Briançon was busied in giving some directions to his attendants relative

to the phaeton, which stood ready for their evening ride.

A glow of delight spread itself in a florid tint, over the fine countenance of the enamoured youth, as with the eagerness of enthusiastic love, and an obeisance of profound respect and tenderest feeling he approached Erina. A deep blush, arising from the comprehension of the sentiments she excited in the bosom of the prince, and the consciousness of partiality for him, suffused the cheeks of the timid maid, as Jaffier Mahomed's expressive looks and manner declared him her empassioned lover. Never had Erina and the prince appeared so interesting to each other as at this moment, when both of them fluttered, trembling, and embarrassed, were at a loss what to say. From this confusion the entrance of de Briançon relieved them. "I mean to resign the reins and the ladies to the care of your highness this evening," said the viscount, "if you are disposed to take the trouble of driving my phaeton in order to enjoy the felicity of giving Rosaline and her friend the pleasure of an airing."

To this the prince replied with all the refined

courtesy of chivalry, that he was ever at the devotion of Lady Kinross and her fair companion, and the former now joining them, and putting herself, with Erina, under the protection of the prince, he mounted the phaeton with graceful agility; and assisting the nymph-like friends into the elegant vehicle, with equal politeness and delight, entertained them by lively and interesting conversation, in which brilliant imagination and refinement of sentiment were so blended as to charm and improve the heart.

The road he took conducted them through a country rich and beautiful. The sun was nearly set, and his bright departing beams, attempered by evening zephyrs, irradiated with mild effulgence the smiling face of nature. pursuing their way by an elevated road, planted on each side with dates, a wide extent of rice-ground was seen on either hand from between the slender stems of the trees, while their long-fringed branches, waving over head, formed an umbrageous canopy. Arriving at length on the borders of a broad expanse of water, skirted with thick woods, an avenue leading through a mango grove, tempted them to proceed under the over-arching boughs, to

take a near view of a magnificent hindoo pagoda which terminated the visto. Through several glades of its surrounding consecrated shades, the rays of the setting sun gilded the hallowed arcades of this grotesque edifice, before which, the two grooms attendant on the carriage, prostrated themselves on the sacred earth with zealous adoration. From a sentiment of philanthropy, Erina aspirated a wish that Heaven in mercy might bless this fervour of religion, although misled by ignorance to idolatrous worship.

Encircling the inclosure of this temple, a winding road tempted them into the recesses of a close wilderness, where, amidst entangled coppice, wild flowers, and shrubs in luxuriant vegetation, wove embowering verdure under a variety of forest trees. In this retreat the knotty trunks of gigantic bannian were seen enwreathed with creeping plants, which hung in festoons to surrounding branches that had taken root, and flourished in sylvan arches about their parent stems. Mingled with the dark-green shining leaves of this singularly picturesque and beautiful tree, the magnificent tamarind, with its spreading boughs, and pale-coloured, lightly playing, and delicate foliage,

resembling the feathery branching-acacia, stretched across the road; and huge jack-trees, with enormous fan-leaved papaw, loaded with large pendant fruit, gave an idea of cultivation and vicinity to human habitation, in a place which seemed wild as the haunts of savage animals in lonely wastes.

Passing through this thick covert, the solemn gloom of the sequestered spot inspired a sensation of pleasing awe. As evening stole upon the scene, the shades of twilight deepened the shadows of the surrounding, overarching trees. The silent birds were now retiring to repose, and nothing interrupted the stillness reigning in this lonely place, except the tread of the horses as they passed over the soft sod, and the rustling of shivering branches which often brushed the phaeton in its passage through the entangling brake of the wood.

Some Fakirs, as the Mahometans call their itinerant religious mendicants, were met strolling through this retirement like pilgrims; and in its deepest recesses Bramins were seen silently performing their vows of mortification

and austerities; adding an appearance of solemnity to the scene.

Although Rosaline and Erina had not long been residents in the country, they had, in their morning and evening rides, explored it so thoroughly as to be perfectly acquainted with all the roads surrounding their villa, and knew that the way they were now pursuing would lead them home; but by a circuitous and thickly over-shadowed road which the encreasing darkness of the hour, that they found to be later than they had imagined, would render not only difficult, but dangerous.

The ride had been chosen because it was Erina's favourite road; the prince admired it as romantically rural, and would have wished the time prolonged, when seated behind her in unconstrained retirement, he felt himself at liberty to indulge, both in thought and expression, that strain of sentiment which the presence of any person, but Lady Kinross would have interrupted.

As the evening was closing in, she expressed her uneasiness at the apprehension of their being benighted in the intricacies of the wood:

and the moment her alarms on this subject were disclosed to the prince, he yielded his desire to prolong the ride, to the wish Rosaline gently hinted of returning home by the shorter and opener road they came. With a sweetness of temper, and a compliance of disposition, testified in the softest and most engaging manner, he instantly agreed to the proposal, although Lady Kinross submitted it to his decision, whether it were most adviseable to proceed or risk turning the carriage in a very narrow and uneven road. Sensible of all the danger attendant on the attempt, he resolved to make it, in order to tranquillize the alarms of the timid Rosaline; and reigning in the horses, he requested her to alight with her fair companion, whilst he endeavoured to turn the phaeton.

Notwithstanding Erina felt no fear of remaining in the carriage, she readily consented to take the trouble of dismounting with her friend rather than boast a superior courage; which might have induced the amiable Rosaline to the painful effort of endeavouring to subdue her apprehensions, as Erina knew she was capable of doing, to conform to her inclination of keeping her seat, or else to have

experienced uneasiness in giving any to her friend in doing what she felt contrary to her liking.

Being left now to the execution of a difficult task, with extreme dexterity the prince had nearly accomplished what appeared almost an impossibility, when one of the spirited horses he managed with extraordinary skill, plunged with impatient metal, and so terrified Erina, who, with an anxiously beating heart, saw all the danger of the prince, that she uttered a shriek, which frightened the animal in such a manner as to render him ungovernable. No longer obedient to the rein, he reared and curveted so as to overset the phaeton; when at the dreadful accident Erina felt conscious of having occasioned, she fell fainting into the arms of Rosaline.

Fortunately, the shock of overturning had been, in a great measure, prevented by the bushes and underwood, amidst which, upon the top of a young palm-tree, the carriage was supported in its fall, and the wheels got so entangled in the brushwood, that the horses were checked from running off; by which means the sices, or attendant grooms,

were enabled to seize and manage them, whilst with a spring of vigour and agility, the prince leaped from the phaeton, and flew to assist the terrified Rosaline in supporting and restoring to animation her fainting friend. Erina looked beautiful, even divested of sense and the vivid bloom which always enlivened her exquisite features; their perfect symmetry alone, now constituted the most interesting loveliness, as her agonized lover hung over her whilst her pallid face, bathed in a shower of tenderest friendship's tears, reclined on Rosaline's bosom. As in mute anguish the prince contemplated the sweet picture of the two beauteous friends, his own attitude and countenance would have furnished a painter with the finest study for the delineation of manly grace and feeling. Having thrown himself on one knee before the reclined Erina, he seized, and pressed her hands with all the expression of agonized love; that expression, beaming from his eyes, met her's, as with returning animation they opened on the object before her. Awakening to the remembrance of his danger, which had so shocked as to deprive her of all sense, its first impulse was an eager enquiry respecting the prince's situation; and after reiterated interrogations, on her part, relative to his safety

and his repeated assurances that he had escaped all peril, the gentle Erina warmly ejaculated her thanks to Heaven for its gracious protection of her deliverer, and animated by gratitude to Providence for the preservation of him who, in similar circumstances, had saved her life, the amiable girl disclosed her sentiments with all the energy of her enthusiastic nature, and then exhausted by the powerful and opposite emotions she had experienced from the first shock to her subsequent terror for the prince's perilous situation, and the liveliest joy at his miraculous escape from it, her fluttered spirits relieved themselves in a shower of tears.

The still anxious lover agitated by mingled and conflicting sentiments of tenderest solicitude, fear and hope, grief and joy, pain and pleasure, supported with trembling arms the enchanting maid he idolized, whilst Rosaline sought for a smelling-bottle to prevent the danger of a second swoon. To restore Erina's fluttered spirits, her friend bathed her fair polished forehead and temples with lavender-water, whilst, at the desire of Lady Kinross, the prince rubbed some on the hands of their beautiful patient; who, sweetly smiling in

soft accents of heart-felt gratitude, thanked them for so kindly and carefully performing the offices of friendship.

Rosaline kneeling beside Erina, who, still enfeebled by a sensation of faintnesss, leaned with virgin timidity on the arm of the prince, took off her hat to chafe her temples with greater ease. The profusion of her glossy auburn tresses, flowing unbound in disheveled waves on her beautiful shoulders, and snowy bosom, while a few light ringlets shaded her enchanting face—the sweet expression that beamed in mild radiance from her eyes, and animated her bewitching smiles; the exquisitely fine form of her graceful half-recumbent figure as she sat on the turf on which she had fallen; the mellifluous tones of her voice as in gentle accents she spoke her thanks to each of her assiduous attendants; and, above all, the touch of her beautiful arm and hand, white and smooth as polished ivory, roused the ardent feelings of the enamoured prince to transports' supremest ecstasy. Love most enthusiastic, yet pure as energetic, declared itself in the glances of his eyes, tenderness, united with exquisite delicacy, spoke in each word he uttered, whilst the tremulous pressure of his

soft hand as he respectfully touched the taper fingers of Erina's, and applied the refreshing perfume to her roseat palm, expressed more than language would have dared, in the first avowal of a passion, to whisper in a bashful virgin's ear.

Without comprehending the prince's feelings, Erina's took alarm from sympathy; and heightening blushes, down-cast looks, and faltring accents, confessed more than awakened consciousness was fully sensible either of disclosing or experiencing. Ever capable of exertion when circumstances demand it, the modest Erina felt now particularly called upon to summon all her presence of mind, and making an effort to shake off the languor which reminded her of her recent swoon, she rose with the assistance of Rosaline's offered arm, and with trembling steps, aided by the prince at his entreaty, with more courage than strength of frame, she took her seat in the phaeton, which forunately had been preserved from damage; and even in the flutter of spirits occasioned by a concurrence of circumstances which might have overpowered her, Erina set an example that resolution was sufficient

to overcome whatever good sense determined to conquer.

The shades of night, which in the torrid zone succeed quickly after sun-set, had nearly darkened the close wood ere they left its recesses; but the fear of alarming each other kept both the fair friends from disclosing their apprehensions of missing the sequestered road, or encountering another accident. At length emerging from the deep shade that enveloped the grove, bright moon-beams lighted the remainder of their way homeward.

On their arrival at the villa, they found de Briançon and the count impatiently waiting their return. The accident which had occurred, was recounted by Rosaline with great warmth of encomium on the prince. On the theme of his politeness, his adroitness, and his risks in their service, the generous Erina could not with-hold her tribute of praise, nor conceal the gratitude she felt his due, whilst Jaffier Mahomed, gratified, yet embarrassed by the eulogiums so lavishly bestowed on him, modestly wished those acknowledgements silenced, which he thought far over-rated his merits.

As the evening was cool, the party repaired to the tea-table in the saloon, and gathered round it in the social English manner. On assembling near the light, the quick-sighted Erina perceived some drops of blood upon the shawl which the prince wore as a scarf—with anxious trepidation the discovery was mentioned as soon as made; when the gentle Rosaline, united with de Briançon in solicitude, about their illustrious guest; who, unable to prevaricate, was compelled to confess he had received a slight hurt in his arm. This circumstance he would not have disclosed, had not the indications of the wound led to its discovery: at the solicitations of the viscount and the two ladies, that he would retire, and examine the injury he had received, the prince said he was certain it was a mere scratch not worth noticing; when indicating the place he stretched forth his left arm, and found his vestments torn in a long slit from the elbow downward—he had not before remarked this as his attention had been too much devoted to Erina when she fainted, to permit him to bestow a thought upon himself. At her earnest entreaty, however, he now submitted his arm to de Briançon's examination, who found a deep cut where the sleeve was torn. Of this

the prince made very light, whilst the viscount and the two fair friends, expressing the utmost uneasiness at this accident, advised the wound to be bound up until some proper dressing might be procured. De Briançon, ever gay, desired Erina to officiate as surgeon; telling her that, " he was sure a bandage applied by her beautiful hands must prove a miraculous cure, and might supersede the necessity of medical advice, which would be fortunate, as none could be procured on the spot."

This little lively sally was made to vex the count; who, on his arrival at the villa that evening, seemed hurt to find Erina absent with he prince, and shewed extreme jealousy of he deep interest which each now evinced towards the other. That interest had never been before either so much awakened, or so unequivocally demonstrated, as when through the languor of recent indisposition, Erina's fluttered spirits betrayed emotions which first made de l'Armencour dread the prince as a rival, and inspired the latter with a hope of success that encouraged him to declare in his looks and manner, that he was the empassioned lover of Erina.

Embarrassed by de Briançon, she blushed deeply, and knew not what to say, when the prince, who had placed himself beside the object of his admiration, turned towards her, and, in a half-whispering accent, and a glance that gave the tenderest meaning to his words, said, "would to Heaven I might flatter myself with a hope that you would apply a remedy to my wound!"

Abashed at the idea of its being supposed she took this sentence in any but a literal sense; and willing to carry off the confusion she felt, she determined to enter into a jest, to shew she considered it as such, and rallying her accustomed spirits, she replied with vivacity, that as his highness had been wounded in the service of Lady Kinross, and had neglected himself in attending on her to extricate them from their difficulty, she could not, either in justice or gratitude, refuse repaying a service his highness had rendered her, and would, with pleasure apply the bandage prescribed by the viscount.

Thus saying, she called to an attendant desiring him to ask Silvia for a fine cambric handkerchief; and, having received it, with a blush-

ing smile of embarrassment, mingled with the soft expression of a heart alive to the tenderest sensibility, and with all the engaging modesty of virgin delicacy, Erina bound, with trembling hands, the arm of the Prince; who, with looks eloquently expressive of every sentiment an empassioned lover could experience on such an occasion, gracefully bowed his thanks for a sweet condescension which promised sanguine hope of a future triumph.

Elated by sweet anticipation, the illustrious youth, ever elegant and engaging, became more so than ever. While the count, chagrined beyond description, at thinking, for the first time, that he was outshone, and not regarded as the chief object of attention, was rendered more diagreeable than Erina had ever thought him, by the mortification his pride and vanity experienced, in feeling that the partiality he flattered himself she entertained for him, was now transferred to a rival.

The amiable girl unconsciously now evinced a preference for the prince, which although long indulged in secret, had never hitherto appeared.

The volatile de Briançon, who, with an excellent heart was not troubled by acute sensibility, though an universal admirer of female beauty, enjoyed the mortification of the conceited count, who always prided himself on being a most successful gallant, and boasted of the favours he received. In character totally dissimilar, the viscount despised de l'Armencour, and delighting in seeing him humbled, was pleased to observe the reciprocal attentions of Erina and the prince; for de Briançon had never experienced a passion that could lead him to imagine any heart had ever been broken for love.

Rosaline, more romantic in her ideas on the subject of mutual attachment, esteemed too highly the virtues of Jaffier Mahomed, to feel uneasy at the adoration he so delicately and respectfully evinced for Erina; and knew the heart of that amiable girl too well to suspect her of ever indulging a sentiment or thought that the most rigid prudence could condemn.

Thus persuaded, her conduct uniformly demonstrated the confidence she placed in the prince's honour, and the high consideration she cherished for his qualities.

Good humour, friendship, and gaiety, presided in the circle at the villa; where, according to custom, a numerous company assembled to spend a social evening. The story of the excursion that afternoon, afforded much conversation; and subjected Erina to innumerable enquiries on the theme of her fainting, which embarrassed her.

De l'Armencour haughty, provoked, and even offended with Erina, jealously kept his station beside her, while the prince placing himself on the other hand of the object o universal attraction, shared the largest portion of her smiles, for which there gathered an encircling crowd of eager candidates. Her general sweetness of deportment, her easy flow of vivacity, combined with the strictest decorum, and the total absence of affectation, presumption on the adulation she received, inspired the prince with equal admiration and delight. "This," cried he to himself, "is the being I have sought—this is the creature for whom I would sacrifice every thing!"

The bandage on his arm, although not ostentatiously displayed, attracted observation, and told the visitors he had suffered from

the accident during the evening drive. A young officer accosting him when approaching to address Erina, demanded of the prince if the wound was painful; to which he replied, "a sovereign remedy for the most excruciating torture had been applied with equal kindness and success."

In tacit reply to an expressive look directed by the prince to Erina, she smiled; while a malignant scowl glancing on him from the eyes of de l'Armencour, spoke jealousy so plainly as to indicate to the young officer's observation that the reputed lover of Erina was envious that her favour had been bestowed on the prince; this remark threw a light upon speech, which led to a conjecture of something like the true state of the matter. Anxiety to investigate it, added to which curiosity, the stimulus of a hope to find amusement, not unnatural in a young, gay French officer, induced him to pursue the subject; and bowing with a pointed meaning in his countenance, he requested to know the extraordinary efficacious recipe from which the prince had received such wonderful benefit; adding, with a look at Erina, that he was desirous of having an excellent prescription for painful and dangerous

wounds, as he was in a situation to receive desperate ones.

"The remedy I have been so fortunate to obtain," replied the prince, "can only be administered by the person who performs the cure, by a species of enchantment or charm."

"That charm," rejoined the young officer, with a significant glance, "appears to me to consist in a handkerchief."

"And more in the manner of applying it," interrupted the prince.

The jealous count, indignant at a conversation which his malevolence considered as intended to insult him, impatiently turned the discourse: and during the remainder of the evening testified an ill-humour, which set off to the utmost advantage the elegant urbanity of Jaffier Mahomed; and more than ever proved to the observant Erina, that *unamiable qualities must as invariably disgust, as virtuous dispositions charm and engage the heart of sensibility.*

CHAP. XIV.

"The consciousness of beneficence to our fellow-creatures will render us happy in every situation; since the idea of contributing to their welfare and felicity must console us for the heaviest misfortunes, when they afford us the means of being useful."

ON the following morning, at an early hour, de Briançon called on the prince, to enquire after his health; and was accompanied back to the villa by him, notwithstanding the inflammation attendant on the lasceration of his arm, had occasioned some swelling, a good deal of pain, and a great degree of fever. But neither these circumstances, nor the express desire of his medical attendant, that he would remain at home, did he regard as obstacles to his paying personal homage at the villa: and when Lady Kinross and Erina scolded him for

being so negligent of himself, he assured them that the pain of absenting himself from their presence, would have done him more material harm than any liberty he could have taken with his health. "Besides, he continued, "I promised to commence instructing my fair pupil in the Persian language to day; and independent of the absolute obligation of keeping one's word sacred, the pleasure I have in performing the promise in question, ensures my not infringing it."

In compliance with the urgent intreaties of the prince, Erina now commenced her lessons; and fixing a stated hour daily to attend to them, he took his leave, expressing an intention of waiting on his fair friends in the evening.

Thus, each day, paying a morning and afternoon visit, the amiable youth directed Erina's studies in oriental literature: and each had, by this means, an opportunity of knowing intimately the admirable character of the other, and observing closely that transendant genius, that exquisite taste, that high cultivation of a superior understanding, and those innumerable brilliant accomplishments, which distinguished

them both. Every hour, each moment, discovered to Erina some quality in the prince which riveted her esteem, whilst it excited her admiration. In her illustrious instructor she found united all she considered requisite to human perfection, and regarded him as a being almost superior to mortal nature.

Erina had not long pursued the study of the Persian language, when she found the count's assiduities increase to greater particularity than his former attentions marked; yet, with his increased assiduity, a jealousy was mingled which amused, whilst it tormented her; and made her anxiously desire he might, by a speedy declaration of his intentions, afford her an opportunity of decidedly rejecting his pursuit, which he found it difficult to discourage, situated as he was, without an explicit avowal of the purport of civilities which it was impossible her delicacy could shew she construed into addresses, until the positive offer of his hand authorised her to consider, and decline them as such.

Ignorant as de l'Armencour was of the prince's views, the admiration he evinced for Erina would have gratified the count as a compli-

ment paid to his taste, and a great addition to the triumph he had long flattered his vanity with, by anticipation, had not Erina's evident high opinion of Jaffier Mahomed, proved he was, of all men, the first in her estimation, and thus wounded a conceit which, until then, had persuaded de l'Armencour he must ever be the chief object in the consideration of every woman he distinguished by his attentions. To find them received with indifference by Erina, had, at first, so hurt his pride as to pique it to perseverance, which promised certain success to his self-love: and to foresee now a threatened disappointment in his sanguine expectations, instead of their long anticipated accomplishment, mortified him most sensibly; especially as this disappointment appeared to originate from a decided preference of a rival candidate for favour, instead of arising from mere caprice, to which he once attributed Erina's indifference; or from a fickleness of disposition, rendered frigid and inconstant through excessive vanity, which he believed to be the cause of the frustration of his scheme for a temporary gallantry with Madame d'Evreul. As an intention of avenging her slight, had, in some measure, instigated his assiduities to Erina, he received a

double mortification, or rather a manifold humiliation in failing of success relative to his views on that universally admired girl; from whose celebrity the recent hope of increasing his own, now changed into fear of his becoming an object of general contempt and derision. This apprehension would have deterred him from paying his addresses to her, had not his attentions so clearly demonstrated to all the inhabitants of Chandenagore that he pretended to her hand, that every one would have believed him a rejected lover, even had he refrained from making his intended offer. He, therefore, resolved to hazard a declaration as soon as possible; and only waited a convenient opportunity to offer his proposals; resolved on success or the destruction of that innocent and beautiful creature he pretended to love; for jealousy, not founded on an empassioned affection, but springing from a diabolical pride, instigated him never to submit tamely to a rejection that would render him the scornful laugh of those before whom he had always boasted of invariable success with every woman he had ever pursued; rather than suspect himself of being the derision, or even the pity of Chandenagore as the rejected lover of Erina, he would gladly have plunged a dagger in her

heart, and have seen her mangled corse floating down the Hoogley to an unblessed grave, have burried her himself in unhallowed pagan ground, unconsecrated by one tear, than seen her live even in celibacy, after refusing his hand; but the bare idea of her flying him for another would so have provoked his malignant passions, that he would have braved openly all laws to destroy her fame, together with her life; and would have sacrificed his own. He would have met the avenging sword of her spirited protector, de Briançon, and fallen by his own, had he escaped the chastising arm of the viscount, to avoid that of justice; for de l'Armencour was governed by nothing but his violent passions, and had no principles except those of vice.

The continual presence and constant, close attention of the prince to his lovely pupil, presented daily obstacles to the declaration the count meditated, and, at the same time, infuriated his malignant nature. He frequently interrupted the lessons Erina received from her oriental instructor, and spent every evening at the villa; where, prevented by the assiduities of her illustrious attendant, from any possibility of seizing a moment of private

conference, de l'Armencour was an equal constraint upon the prince. In their evening rides and walks, Erina always had her European and Eastern lover beside her, whilst Rosaline was left to the attention of de Briançon.

On one of these occasions, as the party were strolling on the terrace, and admiring the meandering course of the beautiful Hoogley, she expressed a wish of making an excursion on the river; and the prince, who was ever anxious to gratify, and even anticipate her desires, immediately proposed a party on the water for the following evening, telling the viscount he would order his barges, if the ladies would honour him with their company in his bugerow. To this proposal the amiable Rosaline instantly consented at the eager solicitation of Erina, whilst the mortified count secretly swelled with rage that the prince, in his earnestness to oblige her, had anticipated the offer of gallantry; and its ready acceptance contributed greatly to increase the jealous fury of de l'Armencour.

Maliciously intent on preventing the excursion, or at least, of destroying its pleasure, he artfully turned the expression of disaproba-

tion, which he was conscious both Erina's and ths prince's penetration must have discovered in his countenance, to uneasiness relative to the danger of the plan proposed. Deep as de l'Armencour was in cunning, it was as possible for him to feign well, as to conceive an hypocritical design. Acquainted perfectly with the character and dispositions of Erina and Rosaline, he conceived the intention and hope of making the timidity of the latter, and the delicate generosity of the former, operate to the completion of his scheme : and he began to try the success of it with duplicity, calculated to make deceit appear not only perfectly artless, but amiably and most disinterestedly sincere.

He commenced his insidious plan by declaring, that although he was extremely fond of water excursions, and had been particularly desirous of proposing one in order to gratify the fair companion of Lady Kinross, yet he had done himself the violence to appear impolite and inattentive, rather than hazard putting either of the ladies in a painful situation. " I am aware," continued the count in his tenderest and most insinuating manner, " that the boats of this country are not so safe

as European ones, and that the watermen are not dextrous: added to which, I know this river to be extremely dangerous: and therefore I did not wish to subject the ladies to peril, especially as I was certain the amiable companion of Lady Kinross would have felt her exquisite sensibility dreadfully shocked, if for her sake the timidity of her beloved friend had been put to any painful trial."

According to the expectation of de l'Armencour, Erina's sensibility was instantly aroused by this hint, to the severest self-condemnation and reproaches, for having thus unthinkingly, not only started a proposal distressing to her friend, but pressed the execu- of a plan originating from an idea of her suggestion; and with all the eagerness she had urged the excursion on the river, Erina now entreated all thoughts of it might be laid aside.

But Rosaline, equally amiable, and nobly generous, assuring the count she was remarkably fond of being on the water, and perfectly free from the smallest apprehension of any danger under the protection of the prince, their gallant defender in peril, solicited him not to relinquish his idea of affording his friends a delightful entertainment; which none would

receive more pleasure from than herself. To this, with his accustomed politeness, and engaging manner, he replied, that although he could assure her ladyship there was not the least cause for the smallest apprehension of any danger on the river in his budgerow, and notwithstanding the happiness he should experience in having the honour of her company in it, with her fair friend, he should willingly relinquish it rather than occasion either of them a moment's uneasiness.

The count, with all the artifice which duplicity, consummate as his, could adopt, to carry a point that would highly gratify his ruling passions, again endeavoured to insinuate his former objections to the proposal, with a two-fold hope of entirely putting a stop to the design, and at the same time, proving his attachment most lively and sincere, by a disinterested consideration for Lady Kinross and Erina.

De Briançon, however, partly divining the intentions of de l'Armencour, and prompted strongly to circumvent his malicious designs, insisted on the excursion on the water taking place, and in his usual merry mood of droll

vivacity, assured each of the party he should, in the present instance, exert his authority to command, as it was necessary Lady Kinross should acquire the courage requisite for a soldier's wife, who must frequently submit to difficult and trying circumstances. Having thus finally settled the matter, and compleatly frustrated the count's scheme, and mortified him beyond measure, the disappointed lover could only vent his spleen by shrugging up his shoulders, and ejaculating with the pointed sarcasm of ill-nature, "Heavens, what a tyrant of a husband!" Then turning to Erina with all the composure and softness he could assume, he told her he should make a point of attending her, as he felt extremely uneasy lest an accident might occur which would render his presence useful. Erina, provoked at his constant obtrusion, with a frigid politeness, ceremoniously acknowledged herself obliged by his kind attention; adding, at the same time, that under the prince's care, it would be impossible for her to require any other; as his his highness had already proved by the exertion of his services, that his protection might be always depended upon in the most dangerous situations.

This speech, spoken in the amiable sincerity of Erina's warmly grateful heart, evinced its sentiments too candidly to be agreeable to de l'Armencour; who resolved on making her repent an insult which keenly wounded that pride which was too great to shew itself offended; while the prince, as highly flattered as the count felt piqued, thanked Erina by all the eloquence of expressive looks, for this evidence of feeling for him an esteem superior to that she experienced for a man he had every reason to believe not only a rival candidate for Erina's favour, but her declared lover.

The evening passed in demonstration of the sentiments each may be supposed to have entertained in their situation; and met on the following afternoon with similar sensations relative to each other much elucidated, considerably strengthened, and unchangeably confirmed not only by deep affection, but by observation; which fully investigated each other's opinions.

After an early dinner, the party repaired to the water side, to take boat from the temple on the terrace that hung over the Hoogley.

On its clear stream the barge of Jaffier Mahomed, accompanied by two other budgerows, floated on the undulating tide, with banners flying in the breeze. These ensigns of the most brilliant scarlet dye, bore the prince's arms, which represented, on a sapphire field, a tiger rampant topaz, holding an Eastern tiara enriched with diamonds, pearls and rubies. The seats and awning of the barge were of scarlet velvet, fringed with gold, and supported by pillars richly wrought of the same precious metal, to represent palm-trees, the tufted branches of which formed the most magnificent capitals to the pillars. The stern ornament of the budgerow was an immense golden peacock, with an expanded train studded with various gems, and the prow of the vessel represented a large tiger rampant of gold, like the bearing on his shield. The rowers and steersman were habited in scarlet, with girdles, turbans, and armlets of gold tissue, and breast-plates of gold, on which, in embossed work, the prince's armorial bearing was emblazoned.

Into this sumptuous barge the illustrious youth handed Lady Kinross, and the gayly smiling object of his ardent affection: and

telling the latter, that he submitted all he had and himself, to her absolute command; he placed her on his own elevated and central seat, then courteously requesting Lady Kinross to take the cushion on her fair friend's right hand, as a situation of the highest dignity he could allot her, the prince politely desired de Briançon and the count to take their stations on each of the side benches of the budgerow, whilst he seated himself on the carpet at Erina's feet, assuring her that place was his highest ambition.

There was something so engaging, and so elegantly pleasant in the prince's gallantry, that it charmed Erina, delighted Rosaline, and afforded de Briançon infinite amusement, to see the proud and conceited count compleatly mortified in feeling himself so far outshone.

The easy gaiety, and pre-eminent grace of Jaffier Mahomed as he entertained with sensible and captivating conversation each of his company.—The uncommon flow of the viscount's spirits.—The sportive vivacity of Rosaline—The sweet encreased affability, and even the beauty of Erina, heightened by her enjoyment of the splendid scene she chiefly

ornamented, conveyed to the malevolent soul of de l'Armencour, a sensation of direful jealousy, envenomed with rancour which made him feel sick at heart. The violent passions that irritated his mind, not only jaundiced every thing to his view, but rendered him conscious of his insignificance in the circle where, heretofore, he was accustomed to think himself the object of first consequence.

When the budgerows had proceeded a little way on the river, the vessel on each side of the prince's barge began a symphonious concert, to whose strains the rowers kept exact measure. As the prince was fond of music, and a good judge of it, he had collected an excellent band; which played in exquisite taste alternate soft and martial airs, as the barges proceeded up the river.

After rowing past several beautiful reaches of variegated landscape, the boatmen directed their vessel to an enchanting rural spot; where amidst deep embowering shades of banniantrees, tamarinds, mangoes, oranges, and intermingled cocoa, palm, and date-trees, a superb pavilion of scarlet-cloth, fringed and tasseled with gold, and supported by gilded pillars of

palm, similar to those that were in the barge, seemed to present a fairy scene.

A company of sepoys belonging to the prince's guards, with a number of his attendants, bearing scimiters and shields, interspersed among other officers of his suite, carrying splendid insignia, and many domestics of his houshold, formed at the water-side a magnificent retinue; and disposed themselves in a line on each side of the pavilion, whilst the prince requesting the gentlemen and his two fair companions to honour him with their company to partake some refreshment, handed Lady Kinross and Erina from the barge through the ranks of his attendant train, to the splendid pavillion, and seated them beside himself on either hand, at the head of a table covered with a sumptuous banquet.

Every fruit in season which the country produced, with the choicest European confectionary, and all the rich preserves of the East, served on wrought dishes of solid gold, solicited the appetite, whilst the sight was charmed by the elegant profusion of the princely banquet. The board was decorated with nosegays of the sweetest flowers; of which large gar-

lands were entwined round the pillars, and hung in gay festoons between them, scattering odours on the breeze; whilst aromatic and refreshing fragrance exhaled from baskets filled with spices and perfumes, which the attendants sprinkled around from vessels of gold and silver filigree. A bason and ewer of the same, filled with rose water, was handed to each guest, according to the Asiatic mode of ablution, before and after repasts.

In vases of gold and goblets of the same, richly embossed and studded with gems, a variety of delicious beverages, composed of the expressed juice of different fruits, with sugar, milk pure from the cow, some of it acidulated and coagulated, which the native Indians call tyre, with the juice of the palm and date-trees that afford a delightful drink, and the milk of cocoa-nuts, superseded the necessity of wine, which the prince excused himself from offering, as he religiously abstained from the use of it, or any intoxicating liquor at his table.

Whilst the guests partook of this Eastern banquet, the more delightful from its being perfectly unexpected, entirely novel, and

equally splendid and elegant as the prince's gallantry, his band, stationed on the clear, rapid, and full-flowing Hoogley, performed, in the finest taste, a variety of airs; and, amongst other pieces, the English popular tunes of "God save the King," and "Rule Britannia," were played with infinite spirit and delicacy in compliment to the two fair British ladies.

A smile from Rosaline and Erina testified their acknowledgments for the prince's polite attention to them, whilst in the eye of each a tear stood trembling, as a tribute of sensibility to the remembrance of their absent friends and country.

As absorbed in pleasing recollection, the pensive Lady Kinross and Erina listened to notes of favourite melodies, in which the full-toned horns, with the shrill hautboy, the soft flute, the deep bassoon, and the mellow clarionet, mingled with the accordant beats of the solemn-sounding drum, in enchanting harmony, awakened all their feelings to tenderest sentiment; a clamour of human voices, accompanied by discordant music, aroused their attention. In the distant noise of Asiatic min-

strelsy the loud tomtom, or Eastern drum, was almost lost in repeated shouts, which seemed to indicate the celebration of some great ceremony, at a little distance from the pavillion.

The curiosity of Rosaline and Erina was awakened to see the show which the noise announced; and expressing a lively desire to walk towards the place whence the sound of music and voices proceeded, the prince led his fair companions through the grove towards the quarter to which the noise directed them. Advancing to an opening in the wood, they perceived a crowd assembled round a beautiful Gentoo girl; and drawing near, the prince learned she was preparing to sacrifice herself on the funeral pile of her deceased husband.

The communication of this intelligence to the gentle Rosaline and Erina, greatly shocked and affected them. They felt such an anxious solicitude about the youthful and interesting victim, that they were forcibly attracted towards her, notwithstanding their repugnance to view even the preparations for a solemnity which froze the blood with horror.

Approaching with indescribable dread, the

self-devoted sacrifice, they marked with equa pity and astonishment an intrepidity inspired by barbarous false opinions of honour and religion. The widowed victim appeared in the first freshness of youth:—regularity of features, symmetry of form, delicacy of skin, and the utmost modesty of deportment, constituted extreme beauty, heightened by a captivating grace of look and manner. Her syes large, black, and brilliant, yet languishingly soft, were shaded by long silken lashes, and arched brows of jetty hue; hair of the same colour parted on her forehead, which was adorned with pendant ornaments of gold, in shining bands, bound her temples, and meeting behind, hung down in glossy braids below her waist, terminated by golden tassels. Large ear-rings of the same form, and precious metal, surrounded her ears; and innumerable necklaces of massy gold, like a collar, with beads, and a profusion of chains in curious workmanship, with rich armlets, bracelets, and similar decorations on her ancles, afforded a splendid display of Eastern ornaments; whilst the picturesque effect of all was heightened by a veil, or drapery of fine muslin; the soft and snow-white folds of which gave to her appearance some similitude to the painter's idea of a vestal.

As Rosaline and Erina, with the prince, approached, she made a modest obeisance to each; whilst her numerous attendants offering her perfumes, and strewing her path to the bier with odours, extolled in songs the virtues of her deceased husband, and praised her's in the resolve to burn herself in the flames that would shortly consme his remains.

Whilst the prince, deeply affected, explained this to the weeping Rosaline and Erina, they each held out a trembling hand to the unmoved victim: in whose countenance fortitude depicted the calm resignation of a soul resolved on the most dreadful sacrifice for the sake of her honour and religion—and on learning from her, through the interpretation of Jaffier Mahomed, that she voluntarily thus devoted herself to an early sacrifice, rather than live an outcast, and despised amongst her kindred; Erina united with Rosaline in requesting the prince to explain to her that they would receive her like a sister, if she would consent to take refuge under their affectionate protection.

Unacquainted as they were with each other's language, that of the heart sufficiently ex-

plained itself in their looks; and Rosaline, Erina, and the object of their united solitude, held the converse of sentiment so eloquently expressive to souls of exquite sensibility.

The interesting victim evinced her gratitude with placid smiles, entreating the prince would make her best acknowledgments to her fair friends for their generous offer of protection which would tempt her to live, did not her honour and principles induce her to die in conformity with the prevailing custom of the Hindoos. As the prince considered the Gentoo laws, in this instance, extremely contrary to morality, he exerted all his powers to prevent the sacrifice enjoined by erroneous practice; and whilst with energetic eloquence he dissuaded the young widow from her equally exalted and condemnable purpose of self-destruction, the weeping agitated Rosaline and Erina seizing her hands, declared they would rescue from ignorance and superstition its hapless victim, and implant true religion in a soul which would do honour to it.

At the sight of Rosaline's and Erina's fast-flowing tears, the prince, more deeply affected, urged his persuasions with redoubled earnest-

ness; and enumerating in glowing descriptions all the virtues and graces of Rosaline's and Erina's character to the young widow, he awakened her heart to such an enthusiasm and admiration of her fair friends, that she wept at the idea of tearing herself from them, to perform the sacrifice she yet meditated with firmness mingled with reluctance.

The funeral pile, already reared, received the bier—the torches which were to set it on fire blazed terrific—and nothing was wanting to complete the horrid ceremony but the self devoted victim taking her fatal station to expire amidst fierce-ascending flames, whilst shouts, and the din of discordant instruments, drowned her shrieks and groans of terror and despair, too late awakened by the struggles of dying torture.

Erina's lively imagination depicted the dreadful scene; she trembled, turned cold as death, and sunk pale and senseless into the arms of the prince; who, alarmed for the life of the object of his love, and almost frantic, lest the terror might actually destroy her, by affecting a sensibility so delicately acute, instantly commanded the barbarous ceremony might not

proceed. His guards and the attendants silenced the murmurs of the meek Hindoos; who yielded to the authority of the Moorish prince. The gentle Gentoo herself, moved by the affecting sight of Erina's beauteous form apparently lifeless, hung over her weeping with grateful and anxious solicitude, whilst Rosaline and de Briançon, with the affection of a brother and sister, endeavoured to aid the exertions of a distracted lover, in recalling Erina to animation. As she reclined encircled in the prince's supporting arms, he hung over her in agony. The count experienced equal torment in beholding her pressed to the bosom of Jaffier Mahomed, and would have pierced him to the heart for his tender efforts to restore the fainting maid to the sense of this additional obligation to the amiable youth her gratitude already highly estimated as her preserver.

After the application of every remedy the situation afforded, for the recovery of a deep swoon, Erina's recollection returned. The affectionate pressure of Rosaline's hand, the eager congratulations of de Briançon, the sight of the interesting young Hindoo, bathed in the ars of tender solicitude for her safety;

but, above all, the ecstatic smile of the prince as he fixed his fine eyes beaming with unutterable sentiment, which Erina's sympathy explained with equal delicacy, contributed to restore her to those senses which terrific apprehensions had overpowered.

Immediately on her return to recollection, she learned from the prince that he had stopped the cruel ceremony; and that as his authority had been submitted to by the mild and timid Hindoos, the self-devoted victim was, at length, persuaded to relinquish the design of sacrificing herself; and as she could no longer hope for the countenance of her kindred, after this deviation from the custom of her sect, she threw herself on the friendship of her fair friends, for whom she consented to live, in the hope of finding the protection they had kindly offered, and in the expectation of finding consolation in an unremitted endeavour of serving them in every way in her power, with fidelity and affection.

The delightful reflection of having saved a fellow creature's life, the anticipation of being instrumental in rendering that life happy in this world, by preparing a virtuous and inno

cent mind for future beatitude, diffused so pure a joy through the soul of Rosaline and Erina, that they experienced on earth sensations which afforded them a foretaste of Heavenly felicity.

As the youthful widow had not followed to the funeral pile a husband of her choice, neither had lived with him long enough to imbibe for him sentiments tenderer than those of duty, she did not leave his bier with a regret sufficiently lively to be either very painful or lasting. The kindred whom she would have dreaded to meet, she quitted with reluctance diminished by circumstances, and tranferring the attachments of a warm and virtuous nature to beings whom her grateful heart selected as friends, at the aweful moment when her energetic soul, disintangling itself from every former connection, hovered on the wings of expectation, for a flight to unknown regions, she pressed the united hands of Rosaline and Erina to her bosom, and enveloping herself in her veil, she silently permitted them to lead her from the spot of her intended execution, to lengthened life and emancipation, from an existence of enforced confinement, to a volun-

tary seclusion from a world of which she knew nothing.

The evening was now quickly approaching, and amidst the embowering and lengthened shades of the grove consecrated to Hindoo rites, the party left the solemnity of reducing to ashes the deceased Gentoo; and taking boat where they had landed, rowed back to the villa as the last rays of the brilliant setting-sun illumined the horizon, and tinged with gold the stream of the Hoogley, and the summits of the groves which overhung its banks.

With emotions graver, yet equally delightful as those with which Rosaline and Erina left their home, they welcomed the youthful stranger to it—and at her request, permitted her to retire to a room apart from the company; where surrounded by females of her own country, she begged to live secluded from visitors, according to the mode of Hindostan.

A number of guests assembling as usual to supper, concluded the night with social festivity, and Erina retired to her chamber to reflect on the events of the evening, and anticipate the probable occurrences of the mor-

row, amongst which the visits of the prince afforded most subject both of thought and pleasure. Most happy in his presence, she always spent the time of his absence in regreting it. Accustomed as she was to consider him not only as the most amiable of beings, but as her generous preserver, her faithful friend, and her kind instructor, she would have thought herself the most ungrateful, and most worthless of creatures, had she esteemed and regarded him less than she did in every relation; for in the character of her protector, her friend, and her teacher, she felt her obligations to him so great as to be beyond all remuneration. Habituated as she was to see him daily domesticated at the villa, she now treated him with that easy familiarity which, to the inexperience of her enthusiastic and innocent heart, concealed the testimonies of love under those of friendship; and thus, whilst hourly receiving proofs of the prince's passion, and demonstrating towards him sentiments congenial to his, which she considered as nothing more than tributes of reciprocal high esteem, she nourished, in the soul of her lover, and cherished in her own, an attachment which, although often investigated with careful attention, had never appeared to her

in its true colours; for Erina had not yet acquired sufficient knowledge of love to analize it in her own heart, and when occasionally she fancied it indicated in the prince's looks and manner, she quickly checked the supposition as originating in vanity, which she abhorred, or in a foolish idea, she believed it right to banish for the more rational persuasion, in her opinion, that the enthusiasm of an ardent mind gave to the professions of Jaffier Mahomed's friendship, peculiar warmth, and energy which the sympathy of her feelings encouraged, and which vanity alone could construe into the demonstration of a tender passion; and convinced as she was that the prince's character was superior to vanity, she felt ashamed of ever admitting into her mind one thought suggested by such a despicable propensity.

From such reflections, and the continual intimate association with the illustrious youth, Erina received his particular assiduities as the homage of high esteem paid with a gallantry peculiar to a romantic character, which, in every instance, evinced itself. Thus persuaded, the demonstrations of his passion no longer, as at first, either surprised or alarmed its object: suspicious reserve gave place to

tranquil confidence; the deep blush of timidity ceased to crimson the roseat tint of her cheeks, when her lover addressed to her a compliment or speech which consciousness might construe into the avowal of a tender flame, and to the averted and down-cast looks which at first shunned the ardent glances of the enamoured prince, succeeded dimpling smiles of innocent gaiety that spoke a heart replete with sensibility, delighting in reciprocal testimonies of sentiments tenderer than it was conscious of cherishing or encouraging.

The object of Erina's enthusiastic admiration, highest esteem, and most animated regard, watched, with a lover's eye, her every look; and read in her ingenuous manner the flattering opinion she entertained of him. He perceived also her contempt and aversion for the count, which appeared to encrease in just proportion to the sentiments of growing regard she demonstrated towards the prince; yet, in spite of all these observations, he remained an unassuming candidate for her favour. With a delicacy peculiar to himself he always addressed Erina in the most timid language of love, while his every look expressed

passion so refined as to charm into confidence, and ease each feeling of virgin bashfulness.

At the end of some months the prince's fair pupil had made such a progress in the Persian language as to astonish him, notwithstanding his high appreciation of her extraordinary abilities.

Although he attended her for several hours each morning, and spent every evening in her company, either at the villa or in the societies of Chandenagore, no opportunities had presented itself, which his eagerness could seize, to declare the situation of his heart, and enquire into that of Erina's; for the count had kept too strict a guard upon his rival to afford him an occasion of avowing his passion in explicit terms. Each at length completely weary of watching the other, and impatient of delay, longed, with redoubled eagerness, for a moment to offer their suit; when, baffled in the hope of finding an opportunity of making a personal declaration, the count resolved on a measure necessity alone could have persuaded him to adopt—this measure was a written address to Erina.

Diffident, for the first time in his life, of his epistolary talents, he wrote and destroyed innumerable billets. To frame a stile sufficiently dignified to suit his pride, and at the same time humble enough not to disgust Erina, of whose high spirit he had had many convincing proofs, became a matter of extreme difficulty. However, de l'Armencour at last was so satisfied with a performance, which his vanity considered quite as a *chef d'œuvre*, that he forwarded it to her in sanguine expectation of a favourable reply.

In this offer of his hand and fortune, the count set off in pompous terms, his elevated rank, his high descent, and splendid circumstances; little doubting Erina would feel herself flattered by such grand and serious overtures. Vanity, which can persuade the weak mind it inhabits to believe impossibilities that gratify self-love, had latterly suggested to the conceited de l'Armencour, that the encreasing evident coldness of Erina towards him proceeded solely from pique that he had thus long delayed declaring his passion in unequivocal terms; and he was so compleatly duped by his pride as to imagine the marked preference she shewed the prince, was nothing

more than a kind of artifice he had known some women employ; who lure to a serious avowal a coveted lover by a feigned indifference to him, while they coquet with another less agreeable to them, and whom they intend to jilt. Ignorant as the count was of the prince's real intentions as unsuspicious of the progress he had made in Erina's heart, de l'Armencour fondly flattered himself into the entire conviction that his triumph approached; and this persuasion had latterly restored all his good humour, with the return of his self-sufficiency.

In spite of the care he bestowed on the composition of his address to Erina, the letter was the exact transcript of his mind, and a faithful epitome of his character.

Rejoiced at an opportunity of dismissing an attendant whose constant assiduities became every day more disagreeable, and whose continual obtrusion was irksome in the extreme, Erina returned an immediate decided negative to the count's proposals, couched in terms equally polite and firm, which she imagined would free her from all further persecution. In this expectation, however, she deceived

herself; for this rejection inflamed every violent passion in the soul of de l'Armencour, and riveted him, more than ever, to the resolve of carrying the point on which he had so long piqued himself.

Although indignant at the unexpected refusal, he determined to conduct himself towards Erina as usual, to conceal from his acquaintance the mortification he had received, and at the same time to pursue those secret machinations by which he still hoped to gain her consent; or if disappointed in that, to prevent her bestowing herself on any other, by getting her into his possession, and thus gratify his passion, while he avenged himself by her humiliation for his mortification.

Perfectly master of every art requisite to effect his plan, and pleased with the anticipation of future triumph, which his plots promised to sanguine hope, de l'Armencour, with insidious politeness, continued his regular daily visits at the villa, and constantly kept his accustomed strict guard upon the object of his desires.

Erina observed, with equal surprise and con-

cern, that all her frigid indifference and encreased reserve did not discourage the attentions of the count, whom every slight rendered more assiduous. Perplexed and indignant at a persecution that was become intolerable, she would have requested the interference of her friends to check the obtrusion of her impertinent lover, had not motives of delicacy restrained her from making any of them confidants in the affair that distressed her. A fear of implicating de Briançon in an unpleasant business, deterred her from unbosoming herself even to Rosaline; for Erina had experienced too many convincing proofs of her affectionate solicitude to doubt its utmost exertion whenever it were required: she knew that Rosaline would not see her suffer any inconvenience without an effort to relieve her, Erina was also assured that the viscount would evince the friendship he invariably demonstrated towards her in protecting her; and she dreaded to rouse his hot spirit by any complaint of the count's impertinence, apprized as she was of his violent passions and vindictive disposition which might lead him to insult de Briançon as to provoke a challenge. That any thing of the kind should happen on her account would have empoisoned the remainder

of her days; and she therefore resolved to bear every thing patiently rather than involve in difficulty, distress, and destruction, friends who had been such nobly generous benefactors to her. The bare idea of plunging the gentle Rosaline into anxiety and apprehension, distracted Erina, and induced her carefully to guard from her every circumstance which could pain her friendship.

Thus disagreeably situated, she summoned all the forbearance to her aid which prudence could afford, and suffered with unruffled temper hourly provocations.

In her various studies, the pursuit of her several accomplishments, her attention to social duties, and, above all, in the serious and soothing reflections suggested by religion and the constant practice of piety, she found relief from the vexations occasioned by de l'Armencour. Next to the pleasure of conversing with the lively, good-natured, and amiable de Briançon, with her bosom-friend, the gentle Rosaline, and with the interesting prince, Erina found the highest satisfaction in endeavouring to instil into the mind of her new

companion, the young Hindoo, the Christian faith and principles.

In addition to the Persian language, Jaffier Mahomed instructed his clever pupil in the Hindostan tongue, which is understood by every native of Bengal; and united to great abilities, assiduous application, and an ardent desire for improvement, Erina made such progress in her oriental studies, as to be able in a short time to converse with tolerable fluency in the languages of the country.

She found in the young Hindoo an excellent nature.—A heart warm and innocent, a temper sweet and affectionate, ideas nobly exalted, and delicately refined, and manners mild and engaging.—Her youth and gratitude rendered her docile, and a quick apprehension made her imbibe with facility as well as willingness, the knowledge Erina was assiduous in affording her new interesting friend and pupil, whose name was Zeleida.

In conformity with the modes of her country, she secluded herself from company, although she always yielded to the intreaties of Rosaline and Erina, to join their society when

there were no visitors at the villa, and consented to accompany them in their walks about the garden. There at the rising and setting of the sun, when the beams of that bright luminary adorned in highest beauty the face of nature, Rosaline and Erina poured out their hearts in benevolence, friendship, and piety. —There amidst the shades of the extensive continent of Asia, they dwelt on the recollection of their native isles; and, frequently dropping tears of affectionate regret to the memory of their dearest relatives, they blessed Heaven that they were permitted to enjoy each other's presence, and afford each other comfort.—Often at early morn and evening the faithful friends together, offered up their prayers to the celestial throne from the temple which overlooked the Hoogley. In that sweet peaceful retreat, consecrated at dawn and twilight to contemplation, Erina explained to Zeleida the sublime doctrines of the sacred gospel and the Christian faith; and when the lovely girl was thus employed in the pious task of instructing the amiable Hindoo to worship their great Creator in spirit and in truth, and reflected she had been instrumental in rescuing from the perpetration of idolatrous suicide a soul alive to virtue, and ready to embrace

eternal salvation, she ceased to regret, and even blessed, her exile from a beloved native country, and banishment from every relation endeared most tenderly to her heart, learning from experience, that *the consciousness of beneficence to our fellow-creatures, will render us happy in every situation, since the idea of contributing to their welfare and felicity must console us for the heaviest misfortunes when they afford us the means of being useful.*

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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